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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the guide is to address changes in American schools, focusing on holistic learning, multiple intelligences learning theory, and the importance of aesthetic experiences in children's education. It strives to empower professional teachers with knowledge about new learning theories with concrete activities to put that knowledge into practice. The goal is to address the education of the whole child in terms of mind, body, spirit, and social consciousness. Part 1 of the work aims to give direction and perspective to curricula choices of the past, present, and future. Part 2 specifically addresses the present and future need to educate the student via a holistic approach focusing upon the uniqueness and individual potential of each student. The importance of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences are defined and explained in detail as important points to address the whole education of a child in the areas of: (1) verbal-linguistic; (2) logical-mathematical; (3) spatial; (4) musical; (5) bodily-kinesthetic; (6) interpersonal; and (7) intrapersonal. The seven intelligencies are incorporated into all subsequent exercises in the guide. The third section consists of activities in the areas of knowing the self, utilizing all of the senses, and the world of art as an educational tool. Each activity provides the teacher with a purpose, age level, list holistic principles utilized, intelligences utilized, and materials necessary. Contains 96 references. The work is fully indexed. (SD)

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EVERY CHILD, WHOLE CHILD

Classroom Activities for Unleashing Natural Abilities

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EVERY CHILD, WHOLE CHILD

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Classroom Activities for Unleashing Natural Abilities

Leslie Owen Wilson

Zephyr Press
Tucson, Arizona

Every Child, Whole Child
Classroom Activities for Unleashing Natural Abilities

Grades K–6

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To my first teachers—

Ev and Jack, Henrietta and John C., Alice, Peg, and Kathryn

To some great teachers—

Mildred Snyder, Margaret Russell, Eva Griffith, John Schmitz, Arnold Blumberg, Ben Swenson, Kay S. Bull, and Martin L.

To my best teachers—

Jessie and Gilly

All that is not given is lost.

Hasari Pal in *City of Joy*

A note to the reader

The scientific name for the patterns scattered throughout this book is *phosphenes*. Within the common vernacular these are also known as "seeing stars." These phenomena occur when we enter a darkened room or when artificial pressure is applied to the eyes. Phosphenes are created in the brain and within the eye. They were first described, categorized, or artificially induced in the research experiments during the late fifties and early sixties by Penfield of the Montreal Neurological Institute and by Max Knoll describing his research in an article for *Scientific American*. These patterns were chosen for use throughout the text because they also appear in the art, designs, and patterns of many distinct cultures. In essence, they represent one of the visual elements that connects most seeing human beings—they are archetypal symbols.

CONTENTS

PREFACE xi

INTRODUCTION 1

PART ONE • Finding and Confronting the Shadows

1. Questions that Give Direction 15

Where Did It Go? 19
Points of Reference: Observation 25
Encounters of the Wrong Kind 26
Processing Visual Information 29
Visual Gifts Ignored 30
A New Vision 34

PART TWO • To the Future

2. Previews 38

Seeking an Alternative view 39
The Waldorf Example 44
The Design 46
Integrating the Feminine 48
The Multiple Intelligences 49
Gardner's Intelligences Defined 50
Aesthetic Education 57

3. Promises: A User's Guide 63

Intentions 63
The Importance of Blueprints 64
The Stages—A Refresher Course 65
Ages and Stages 67
Ages 6–9 67
Ages 9–12 70
Method 73
Using the Activities 74
Expressive Activities 77

4. Imagery and Visualization 83

Holistic Principles—A Reminder 85
The Importance of Imagery 87
Enhancing Vision 87
Sources for Guided Imagery 92
Sample Exercise 93
Maintaining the Sight 99

PART THREE • On the Care and Maintenance of Gifts: Activities

5. Knowing the Self 103

Expressive Activity Block 1: Seeing Journal 103
Seeing Journal 104
Expressive Activity Block 2: Collections of the Mind
—New Ways of Seeing 105
Rubbings and Embossings: Inside Out or Outside In 106
Textures trip 106
Embossing 106
Rubbings from the Past 107
Seeing in Different Ways 108
Reversing Perspectives 108
Drawing Upside Down 109
Drawing on the Ceiling 111
Drawing on the Ideas of Others 112
Expressive Activity Block 3: Signs, Symbols,
and Mirrors of the Mind 114
Variations on a Theme 116
Movement Phosphenes 117
Symbolic Phosphenes 117
Combinations of Phosphenes 117
Deciphering Petroglyphs and Pictographs 117
Painting Caves 118
Making Mandalas 119

6. Using All the Senses 121

Expressive Activity Block 4: Seeing with All the Senses
—Different Kinds of Seeing 121
No Peeking 122
The No-Peeking Box 123
Seeing through Words: The Power of Allegory 124
The Stream 126

Expressive Activity Block 5: The World of Colors —Inside and Out 131
Color Quest 133
Color Quest Follow-Up Suggestions 133
Colors Inside and Out 135
Stained Glass Windows 136
Monochrome Perspectives 137
Color Me Me 137
Colors in the Environment 138
Bolded Colors 138
Story Clouds 141
Colors and Emotions 142
Color Orchestration 143
Resources 144

7. Texture, Line, and Detail 147

Expressive Activity Block 6: From Reality to Dreams 147
Mosaics 148
Fine Art: Texture and Detail 149
Creating a Neo-Impressionist Artwork 150
Creating a Post-Impressionist Artwork 150
Taking a Different View: Cubist Artwork 151
Line 152
Seeking Variety in Lines 152
Experimenting with Materials 153
Changing Lines 153
Piggybacking on Others' Lines 154
Writing Lines 154
Mirror Images 155
Graffiti 155
Expressive Activity Block 7: Seeing through Dreams —Dreamcatchers 156
The Dreamcatcher 158
Making a Paper-Plate Dreamcatcher 159
Making a Traditional Dreamcatcher 160
Discussion 160
Resources 161
Endings 161

ROADSIGNS, ROADBLOCKS, AND DESTINATIONS: AN EPILOGUE 163

BIBLIOGRAPHY 165

PREFACE

What Was, What Is, What Could Be

If we keep sight of the spiritual motivation behind our children's physical activity, we can be waymakers and guides rather than impeders of their growth.

Polly Berrien Berends

I doubt that any American citizen who has access to media news coverage would refute the fact that we are in the throes of educational reform. Old methods are not working, and suggested educational innovations are prolific. Undoubtedly many of you who have purchased this book, along with many other educators, are actively looking for ideas that will help you change or improve your methods.

If you were to trace the reasons for our current upheaval, you might find yourself looking at a copy of the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, from the National Commission on Excellence in Education. This report told us that American schools were in an abysmal state and heralded the fact that American schools had a terminal illness. The commission reported that our schools were failing to train and educate the populace and, perhaps more important for the state of the union, a competitive work force.

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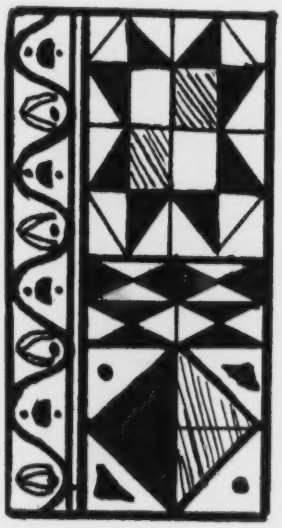
Over the past decade, as a direct result of *A Nation at Risk*, we have had to endure an endless succession of school reports that continually compare American children to students in other industrialized nations. These reports have encompassed anything and everything, from annual standardized test scores to opinion reports from involved and prestigious foundations. The media have been obsessed with American students' ability to compete with other students in the world. As a result of their reporting, the American populace understands neither the true nature of education, the responsibility of educators, nor the momentous demands that our society currently places on the outmoded structure of American schools.

The ultimate winners and losers in this war of words, statistics, and opposing agendas are American children. And not just one generation of children will be affected. The legacy of this era of transition will affect the lives of multiple generations; the very fabric and future of America will be altered.

Despite its frightening possibilities, however, this is a period when great positive transformations can occur. (Indeed, in many other parts of the world they already have.) Ellis, Cogan, and Howey (1991) reflectively consider one of the important components involved in this period of transition:

> The decade of the 1990s promises to be one of significant change in education. The teaching force at the elementary and secondary levels and the professorate in higher education will experience a major generational shift, as nearly forty percent of each group will be retiring. This means that there will be a substantial infusion of new people and ideas into the schools, colleges, and universities—the first significant renewal of the profession in nearly thirty years. This

> change alone will produce many structural, contextual, and substantive changes in the way schooling is done and in the ways teachers are educated. Suffice it to say that if the reform momentum generated in the 1980s continues into the 1990s, schooling in America is likely to be quite different at the beginning of the twenty-first century. (93)



An old Chinese proverb says the importance of a person can be determined by the shadows of enemies. The educational reform Ellis, Cogan, and Howey foresee has many such shadows. These shadows usually belong to those who fear change. Some of the most active opponents of educational change appear to be the radical right—ultraconservatives who fear that schools are indoctrinating children with what they term "New Age" doctrines. And there are also the long shadows of educational traditionalists who romanticize American schools as places where homogenization should take place. They see schools as institutions where all Americans should learn exactly the same thing—children would absorb a common culture through a national curriculum. The curricula these people propose are usually composed of "traditional" Western knowledge, which some of my education students refer to as "dead white men's stuff." In other words, books and articles that propose a national curriculum do not usually include material that is representative of our rich cultural pluralism.

In the midst of the barrage of educational reform movements, parents, teachers, school administrators, the media, business leaders, and the general populace all are asking important questions about schools. Where will all this reform end? What is the future of American education? Could the result of this current round of reforms be a national curriculum, complete

with national competency testing, minimum requirements, mandated content, and standard evaluation procedures? Or will the product be the end of school as we know it?

Fortunately, some of the reformers and the people asking questions conceptualize school as a place for the development of whole children. If these ideas are the ones to be implemented, we will see more personalized forms of education and more organic, dynamic formats that can change quickly according to the needs of individuals or communities. School systems will grow according to the vision, leadership, and sponsorship of individual regions, states, cities, towns, communities, neighborhoods, or families.

The reform movements and theories I am most interested in are those that embrace a special reverence for children as individuals. Such movements regard children as unique human beings endowed with very special gifts. The aim of this book, and my quest, is to aid teachers in their efforts to help each student realize his or her potential. To understand why these views mark a period of radical departure and are even threatening to some people, it may be useful to glance back at America's educational history.

Remember, you cannot abandon what you do not know. To go beyond yourself, you must know yourself.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

A Brief Look Back

The purposes of schooling in the United States evolved gently in its early years. Initially, the advent of public schooling served our colonial forebears by helping children mitigate original sin and delude Satan by learning to read the Bible. Indeed, the original act issued in 1647 that required children of Massachusetts to attend school was called the "Olde Deluder Satan" act. As the Republic took shape,

a literate populace was wanted and schooling became an integral part of our new nation.

In imitation of the British school system, Americans developed dual educational tracks, one for poorer children and one for those who were more affluent. Poorer children attended local elementary schools, while children from wealthy families were packed off to Latin grammar schools, preparatory schools, and colleges. This system applied mostly to white males. While females could attend elementary schools or dame schools, it was male students from wealthy families who were encouraged to pursue secondary and college educations.

The process of running schools varied from state to state. Frequently schools were run, not with public funds, but with revenues from tuition aided by support from churches or private organizations. Schools, school funding, school curricula, and even the language of instruction differed from community to community. Later, in some parts of the country the tradition of the Latin grammar school gave way to Benjamin Franklin's vision of a more practical curriculum, again patterned after English academies. Such courses as accounting, navigation, bookkeeping, public speaking, science, English grammar, penmanship, writing, drawing, and science replaced subjects such as Latin, Greek, and religion. Unlike many earlier colonial schools, the academies offered instruction in English, thus ensuring a common language for America.

At the beginning of the 1800s the practice of establishing state-or community-supported, nonsectarian schools increased. Due to the growth of the common school movement during the first half of the nineteenth century, many communities throughout the United States began to establish publicly funded elementary schools to teach children basic skills.

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In 1874 the Michigan Supreme Court wrote a decision that was to add legal credibility to the establishment of public secondary schools. The court's commentary helped tie compulsory, common education to the destiny of a free republic. This tie became apparent in the late 1800s as waves of immigrants migrated to the cities of America, and compulsory schooling became an agent of socialization, industrialization, and Americanization for children of those born on foreign soil. Until recently, few have questioned these basic intentions and functions of America's schools—to create a literate work force for an industrialized nation as well as a socialized populace who would perpetuate American ideals and beliefs.

Another shift occurred in the educational agenda in 1893 when the National Education Association's Committee of Ten was appointed to study, among other issues, the problem of variance in national secondary curricula and the confusion it caused for those taking college entrance exams. To ensure uniform general knowledge requirements, the committee recommended that a core group of standard courses serve as the basis for entrance requirements to America's colleges and universities. The recommended curriculum was vaguely reminiscent of the classic emphasis of our early Latin grammar schools—Greek, Latin, English and other modern languages, biology, physics, astronomy, chemistry, history, political economy, government. While this core curriculum brought uniformity, these recommendations also helped end a period of experimentation at the secondary level. And, like much associated with education, curriculum changes at the secondary level eventually severely impacted the curriculum of America's elementary schools.

Education Today

With the exceptions of supplanting Greek and Latin with modern languages and the addition of some practical electives, the typical U.S. high school curriculum hasn't changed much over the last one hundred years. Most schools in the United States are using outdated methods to train children for their place in the information age. The hidden agenda of this factory model curriculum emphasized skills needed for an industrialized work force—conformity, sequence, docility, compliance—qualities that train workers for the boredom of assembly line production.

This model, however, is the vision of what was and, in many areas of the country, the vision of what is. It is not a realistic or useful vision of what could, should, or will be. In essence, most schools are giving children who will live and work in a rapidly changing technological world a curriculum structure, knowledge base, and methodologies that were developed for the nineteenth-century world. Almost two decades ago Ronald LaConte (1975) addressed this problem: "One of the glaring ironies of modern education is that schools try to prepare students to live in a time that does not yet exist by concentrating their studies on a time that has ceased to exist" (5).

What about the Future?

Although this short history is highly condensed and oversimplified, it serves as a point of departure for a discussion of what American education could become. At this juncture some important decisions must be made about what is important for children to learn and do, about which historic aims should be retained, about what should be changed, and about the role of schools in our society. While this book is

I am not likely to grasp the new if I cling to the old.

Rudolf Steiner

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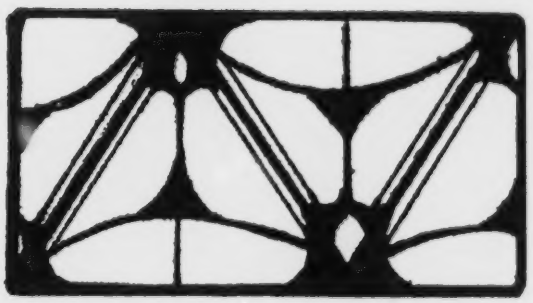
about many of these things, mostly it is about how we can put new theoretical frameworks into active practice.

Today many people are not sure what the functions of school are. Is it a socializing force? An expensive day care center? A trainer for the workplace? A place where knowledge is passed from one generation to another? A place where children exercise their imaginations? A source of inspiration and hope? A prison? All, some, or none of these? Perhaps the reformations will be an artful mix of broadly defined, minimum, national requirements and national competencies within an organic, amorphous, child-centered framework—a framework that can be fitted to local and regional needs.



The Unitary Child

I am a unitary child
Not made of separate parts.
I think. I touch. I feel.
I am a whole being,
Mind, body, and spirit.
See all of me,
The total circle of my essence,
In its entirety.
Revere me for what I am
A child of this world;
A reflection of today;
A mirror of the past;
A link with now and then and tomorrow;
A bit of cosmic dust;
A totally unique being.
See me as I am,
A whole greater than the sum of its parts.
Touch my soul and let me touch yours.
Let us share this time and space,
With reverence for each other's wholeness.
For we are both the children of a greater Parent.

LESLIE OWEN WILSON

INTRODUCTION

No matter where you go, there you are.

Buckaroo Bonzai

This book is a sharing of ideas, thoughts, and experiences. It is a book about schools, teachers, and children, and about changing from an old paradigm to a new one. It is about new ideas and how they might shape the future of American schools. Specifically, this work addresses the seeds for change found in the work of Howard Gardner (multiple intelligences theory) and in holistic learning theory, as well as the importance of aesthetic experiences in the lives and growth of children. This book is also about becoming an empowered professional, with knowledge about the excitingly new and distinctly different theories, and about putting that knowledge into practice. Additionally, it is about the importance of teaching children holistically and looking at learning in unusual ways. Lastly, it is about using all these components to create activities that address the whole child—mind, body, spirit, and social consciousness.

As we all know, the processes of change are often difficult, frequently unsettling, sometimes frightening, and even tumultuous. But change can also be exciting, full of promise and tantalizing invitation. One of the constants of change is that it is inevitable, an integral part of being human. With respect to change as it relates to the profession of teaching, I offer the following metaphors to indicate some of the choices teachers face.

The shared characteristics of good teaching suggest that it has a common energy source. All good teaching has an element in it that binds teacher and students together. Somehow they have linked up; they have made common cause. They find joy in what is happening. . . . Good teaching is not done to students; it is done with them.

Daniel Lindley

1. The Kidnapped Model

These teachers may simply resist change, any change, and eventually be carried or dragged along, kidnapped and led inch by inch on a trip into a vortex of the unknown. With this attitude, teachers cannot control the direction or intensity of the processes involved. They are resistant passengers who have absolutely no say in the destination or decisions concerning the trek—bound, gagged, and stuffed in the back seat, or even worse, in the trunk of a vehicle. These teachers become relegated to being nagging, soundless voices of history, inanimate reminders of what was, monuments to a former time. Like the kidnapped, they are helpless, even sometimes hopeless, participants.

2. The Dependent Model

These teacher-passengers wait until changes are dictated by their superiors; a parental figure from above decides the itinerary. The teachers have assumed roles similar to those of children on the annual family trip. In this scenario, teachers are hoisted up on the wagon of change and become merely voyagers on a vehicle driven by someone else. They might demand food, plead for a potty break, or fight in the back seat, but they have little or no say in the destination, the direction, or the speed of the vehicle. If they are lucky, they may pick up some useful experiences along the way. These passengers haven't been kidnapped, but they might not like where they are going. Through their reluctance to take any initiative, these teachers have relinquished their rights to comment on the planning and execution of the trip.

3. The Co-Passenger Model

These teachers take some action and responsibility for the direction of the trip, and they make some of the decisions involved in the journey. They can offer ideas for possible destinations. They might offer to co-pilot the vehicle or become its navigator. They are helpful passengers, and often they draw maps, initiate discussion about the itinerary, make the reservations, ask for directions, and decide whether and where to take side excursions. When they don't like the destination, the speed, the music on the radio, or the route, they have the opportunity to adjust these aspects in a spirit of cooperation. They learn to negotiate with the other passengers in order to make the trip pleasant, productive, and enjoyable.

4. The Lone Traveler Model

These teachers are the sole determiners of their destination. They frequently travel alone, although they may meet other travelers en route. Some of their companion travelers are friendly and helpful; some discuss their destinations, share their guidebooks, maps, or itineraries, relate their experiences, and offer advice about places to go, things to do, and things to see. Responsibility for planning and executing the trip and for the success of the trip is in the hands of the lone traveler. The traveler decides whether to fly, to drive, to take the train or bus, or even to walk. The traveler's energy level, interests, funds, sense of adventure, and judgment are in his or her own hands.

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Each teacher-traveler must decide which of the above scenarios fits best. What will your posture be as you pursue your journey toward new designs in education? Only after you have made that decision can you decide how to use this text as a guidebook (or as a guide against possible kidnappings!).

If you fall into profile 3 or 4, you may also find yourself in one or more of the following categories:

1. You may perceive yourself as an agent for positive change.
2. You may have an academic interest in new and different approaches to teaching.
3. You may be interested in refreshing your sense of commitment to the practice of teaching.
4. You may be interested in ideas that aid you in helping individual students.
5. You may just be looking for ideas that can be integrated with or transferred to your classroom practice.

If you are motivated in these or other ways to change your practices, many of the ideas in this book might work for you. However, they may seem unusual to some of your colleagues and administrators. They may challenge the status quo of your school. Because it may take some skill on your part to instigate changes, I offer some advice on how you might implement new ideas.

As a former elementary teacher, I have rarely, if ever, been denied the opportunity to do what I thought best in my own classroom. Although this acceptance has much to do with the people for whom I've worked, it is also a result of how I went about

instituting new ideas. Briefly, here are the techniques that have become my credo for implementing new ideas in the classroom and emphasizing the role of the teacher as researcher and practitioner.

1. If you want to institute ideas that might seem unusual to others, always make sure your decisions are based on a strong sense of personal commitment, interest, or belief. Such commitment provides you with the needed incentive and energy to investigate new concepts thoroughly. Always look at pros and cons of a concept before attempting to put it into practice. This ensures that you retain a sense of ownership and commitment. It also gives you a sense of personal professional growth and empowerment.

2. Once you have made up your mind about what you want to do and why you want to do it, try to determine the benefits for and the impact on your students and your teaching methods. This, along with careful investigation of the positive and negative aspects, will help you decide how to present changes to students, parents, and your immediate administrators.

3. After you finalize your plans, present them to your supervisor or administrator, making sure that your opinions are supported by the latest research or by a personally developed rationale. It is very hard for people to argue with experts or supportive citations from nationally recognized publications. Another positive tactic is to prepare a well-written, well-thought-out rationale, emphasizing the possible ways the changes will benefit your students. I believe it is this step

I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.

Mark Twain

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	that will allow you to initiate a number of unusual theories long before they become mainstream practices. Frequently, education is reactive instead of proactive. By investigating material from other professions, you will be able to predict where educational trends are heading. You will also be able to promote respect for your sense of professionalism. Once you have established this attitude, successive attempts at initiating reform or change become much easier. 4. After you have convinced your principal or immediate supervisor of the positive benefits of the concept you want to initiate, devise a plan to introduce the concept to your students. Always explain your reasons for introducing new ideas so your students become partners in an adventure. They will not feel that you are doing something to them or solicitously for them, but that you are exploring together. Additionally, always listen carefully to and consider students' reactions. Sometimes their reactions will guide you to realign an activity or use a different approach. Remember that even primary children have valid opinions, and it is important to hear them out. Collaboration creates powerful allies. Whenever possible, try to see the classroom as "our" classroom rather than "my" classroom. 5. Lastly, always try to inform parents of the changes that you are making, especially if you feel that your intentions could be misinterpreted. Prior to initiating new procedures, send letters home or invite parents into the classroom for a presentation or a sample lesson. You are

not asking their permission to institute changes—you have the right to exercise your professional judgment. Rather, you are informing parents that your intentions are based on careful professional considerations, expertise, and experience. Keep your communications to parents short and free of educational jargon, highlighting the benefits to students. (In my own diverse experiences, I have found very few parents, no matter what their socioeconomic status, who want to restrict their children's progress or explorations—if you provide the parents with appropriate information and a professional rationale.) This step is important because it staves off possible misunderstandings based on poor communication. Parents also make very powerful allies.

You may wish to modify or personalize the suggested steps or develop your own ideas. Whatever your individual formula, it is important to have a well-thought-out strategy. This careful planning separates the proactive, thoughtful professionals from the reactive or caught-by-surprise rank and file.

My guidelines for implementing change and the beliefs and ideas espoused in this book emphasize that American teachers in the twenty-first century need to be astute, responsive practitioners as well as engaged researchers. After all, we are in the Information Age! Teachers will need to be responsible for evaluating innovations, proposed changes, and educational research, as well as for using these ideas in the appropriate context. You can begin the evaluations by asking yourself these questions:

- How do these ideas apply to my immediate practice, area of specialty, and professional needs?

Creativity is a kind of continuously evolving fantasy, and you don't know when a child will grab at that fantasy. What we like to do is to accompany a child as far as possible into the realm of the creative spirit. But we can do no more. At the end of the path is creativity. We don't know if the children will want to follow the path all the way to the end, but it is important that we have shown them not only the road, but also that we have offered them the instruments—the thoughts, the words, the rapport, the solidarity, the love—that sustain the hope of arriving at a moment of joy.

Loris Malaguzzi

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- Are the ideas compatible with my style of teaching and my educational philosophy? And most important,
- How does this new idea help me meet the needs of my students and help them meet their potential through their educational experiences?

I have divided this book into three parts that parallel my guidelines for change. I hope my approach will give readers a sound foundation for making paradigm shifts. Part 1, "Finding and Confronting the Shadows," deals with current elements in schools that may present barriers to the changes I propose. This section discusses the underlying workings and subtle nature of schools. By understanding the many elements that have an impact on the nature and organization of schools, readers can take a thoughtful and realistic look at what is involved in making changes in classroom practices. I also offer personal reflections on questions that drove the investigations reflected in this book. These reflections may be useful as you ask your own questions, make observations, and develop professional judgment.

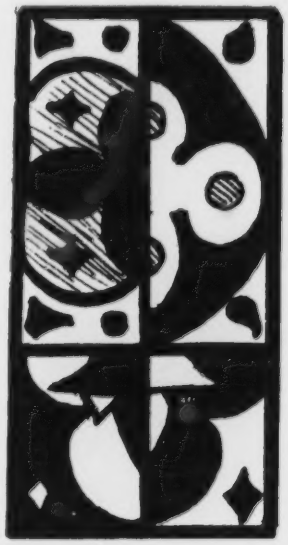
Part 2, "To the Future," offers an overview of new theories and ideas that hold a great deal of promise and are a basis for current and future paradigm shifts. These theories also are the basis for the activities in the second part of the book. Additionally, the User's Guide will help you make the transition from theory to practice by providing rationales, guidelines, cautions, and suggestions for transferring ideas into practice.

Part 3, "On the Care and Maintenance of Gifts," is devoted to activities that illustrate the proposed principles. These activities have been designed and collected with holistic learning and multiple intelligences in mind, and they are intended to encourage

the development of children's aesthetic sense. Additionally, I developed these activities to encourage the care and maintenance (or in some cases, the rekindling and reclamation) of children's imagination, artistic ability, aesthetic sensitivity, sense of wonder, and ability to image, to play, and to create.

This book is driven by the need to share my perspective on and perception of children. It is important to see them as they truly are, as whole human beings—mind, body, spirit, and social consciousness. Throughout this work, I have made certain assumptions about teachers, students, schools, and educational processes:

- All meaningful and lasting change begins with individual awareness and reflection.
- Most educators want what is best for their students and for their students' futures.
- Most educators are capable of recognizing and accommodating, in themselves and in their students, individual differences and characteristics.
- Children have the right of access to the democratic promise of individual freedoms, which includes the right to explore and celebrate methods of self-expression and personal uniqueness.
- Research in the following areas has important and powerful implications and has great potential to change educational practice: the brain/mind and its connection to learning, new theories of intelligence (such as multiple intelligences), holistic education paradigms, and aesthetic education.



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- American education ultimately will experience positive reform through the reflection, persistence, and numinous evolution of those who participate in its systems—mainly classroom teachers.
- Addressing, celebrating, and educating the wholeness of children is, and shall be, a desirable function of our schools.

Summary of Guidelines for Initiating Meaningful Change

1. **Be professionally inquisitive.**
2. **Base investigations and changes in classroom practice on a strong sense of personal need, belief, and commitment.**
3. **Anticipate change by being aware of what is going on in other professional arenas.** Practices in business, science and technology, management, industry, medicine, and the arts may become tomorrow's curricula. Transfer ideas from such sources by borrowing and adapting good ideas to suit your classroom practice.
4. **Do your homework.** Be cognizant of barriers that might block the success of your attempts, and learn to work with or around them. To do this you must become a researcher—not a gray, dusty, bent-over-the-books, time-intensive researcher, but one who is familiar with the historic, social, political, and cultural antecedents and foundations of your profession. Know what elements might deter your progress. Develop

rationales for changing your practice. Investi- both the positive and negative aspects of posed changes and be prepared to present and defend your ideas. Develop thoughtful strategies based on this knowledge.

5. **Approach change in practice with a sense of collaboration.** Students, parents, and administrators can be powerful allies. Create partnerships and learn to communicate your ideas effectively. Also listen to the ideas of others.

6. **Since all attempts at change may not be immediately successful, learn from and revise based on your mistakes.** In our quest to be perfect beings, we forget that failure is often a more powerful teacher than success. Introspective evaluation and self-reflection are necessities for teachers of the next century.

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PART ONE

Finding and Confronting the Shadows

It is seldom in life that one knows that a coming event is one of crucial importance.

Anya Seton

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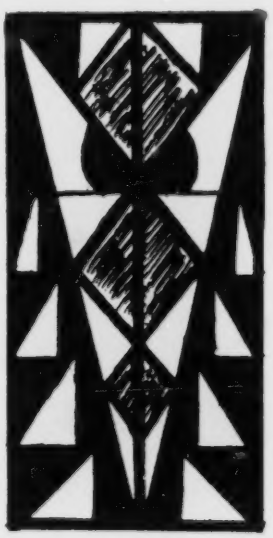
Questions that Give Direction

I want, by understanding myself, to understand others. I want to be all that I am capable of becoming.

Katherine Mansfield

In the twentieth century a number of important concepts have emerged in the field of education (John Dewey's progressive philosophy heralding the importance of experiential learning; brain research as it pertains to learning and thinking; Piaget, Gesell, and Steiner's concepts of children's ages and stages; learning styles; creative problem solving; metacognition; cooperative learning; and so forth). If properly implemented many of the recent theories could revolutionize the nature and tasks of learning. However, most American schools have ignored these ideas due to what Longstreet and Shane (1993) refer to as *cultural mindsets* concerning the structure of knowledge and how schools should function. People tend to view the world as it is defined by their past cultural experiences rather than seeing the intention or potential of new ideas.



Almost all people in America have received or are receiving schooling. We enter the experience of schools with a narrow view of how teachers should

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	teach, what should be taught, the methods that should be used, and what should be included in the curriculum. Many people, simply because they have attended school, think they are experts in the process, and their frequently voiced cultural mindsets often deter educators from changing the structure and nature of schooling. In many communities, entrenched attitudes create tremendous barriers against much needed and important educational reforms. Not only must many bright, innovative teachers deal with strong cultural mindsets, but these same mindsets are found within the teaching profession itself. In 1989 I was doing field supervision of student teachers while completing my doctorate at Oklahoma State University. It was the beginning of the third week of my student teachers' experiences, and most of them were progressing very well. Many of the student teachers were moving rapidly from observation into aiding or teaching small instructional groups. Some student teachers were even teaching isolated lessons, and others had proven themselves competent enough to ask for longer periods of autonomy as "real" teachers. One of my most promising and enthusiastic students, Shelby, had excitedly invited me to observe a creative writing lesson she had prepared for her fifth-grade students. This particular student teacher was innovative and confident, and she had developed an excellent rapport with most of the students. When I arrived for my observation, the students had just finished a whole-class math lesson. Shelby had introduced the main concepts using both visual and experiential examples. The supervising teacher had remained in the room to support and observe. She had aided Shelby by working with individual students who were having problems with the independent practice portion of the lesson. At the end

of the math lesson, the cooperating teacher collected papers, and with a nod and a smile she indicated that the class was in Shelby's hands. She then headed for the quiet of the teachers' lounge to correct the papers. No sooner was she out the door than Shelby launched full force into her writing lesson.

The goal of the lesson was to get the students to write a descriptive passage about their favorite fictional characters. Shelby wanted to create a bridge between the literature unit they would be working on and their recent language arts lessons on the identification of adjectives. Shelby first asked the class to define *adjective*. She then requested that the students state adjectives that could describe people. For a minute the students were painfully silent. Shelby didn't try to rush them—she knew about the importance of wait time. Then a few of the children ventured forth with rather trite, simple descriptors—fat, skinny, tall, short, ugly, pretty. Shelby looked mortified at the dull quality of the responses and at what appeared to be a lack of enthusiasm for the lesson. Instead of regrouping and trying to encourage more creative responses by offering personal examples or doing a visualization exercise, or trying some other techniques, she struggled on and on and on.

The lesson was a flop. It fell far short of Shelby's expectations, and she was crushed. The students seemed to sense her disappointment and frustration, and they appeared to be trying to do what she was asking, but the more they tried, the more it seemed to amplify the fact that they didn't really understand what she wanted them to do. Their responses, both written and oral, were very stale and lacked imagination and originality.

Although Shelby's lesson was well written, she had failed to realize that her students were not used to being asked to be spontaneous or original. The students had lost or suppressed their abilities to do so.

Creativity killers:

Surveillance

Evaluation

Rewards

Competition

Over-control

Restricting choice

Pressure

from the research
of Teresa Amabile

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	Initially, what Shelby saw was a polite, well-behaved group, a class that would have been most student teachers' dream class in task commitment, compliance, and academic achievement. Later, I tried to tell Shelby that it was not her planning or her ideas that had caused the lesson to fall short of her expectations. In this case, as in many other such experiences, there were many reasons for Shelby's students' loss of spontaneity and aesthetic sense. Shelby's practice teacher was an older, well-respected teacher. Most of her lessons were thoroughly planned, whole-class sessions. She also relied heavily on traditional phonics and language arts exercises and insisted on using workbooks and textbooks. She even reverted occasionally to exercises in the basal readers. She spent much of the school day doing drills and practice exercises. Because her students' standardized test scores were usually very good, this teacher had been consistently identified by the district as a master teacher. High test gains, few discipline problems—what more could a principal ask for? Although many of these methods intimidated Shelby, the practice teacher did allow Shelby opportunities to construct personalized lessons using modern ideas and methods. However, Shelby made the same mistake that many adults and practicing teachers make—she had not given the children in her class the time or opportunities to recapture their imaginations and senses of creativity. Unfortunately, when children are continually required to abandon adventure, wonder, active and experiential learning, and risk-taking behaviors, these abilities become repressed and are no longer instinctive. Thus, children need regular periods during which they are allowed to explore and maintain behaviors that feed the development of creativity and artistic expression.

Shelby's story is meant to illustrate how quickly students abandon their true imaginative natures. Undoubtedly, similar occurrences are daily events in schools all over the country. Many of the ideas I gave Shelby appear in this book, but this is not meant to be a cookbook for remediating lost imaginations. The ideas, activities, and theories discussed here are meant not only to sustain and nurture children's natural creative abilities, but also to help teachers identify the causes for children's lost imaginative powers. I hope the information and activities offered will empower educators and parents to make appropriate changes.

If I force a child to see the world in the narrow patterns of my history and my perspectives, I lose the opportunity to be a true teacher.

Bob Samples

Where Did It Go?

According to those who deal in curriculum theory, there are many different types of curricula. In our schools, the most common and recognizable are the written, the hidden, and the null curricula (Longstreet and Shane 1993, Eisner 1985). Like Shelby, even many veteran teachers are unaware that these different types of curricula determine their practices and the talents and interests of their students. These curricula, which directly or indirectly affect the lives of teachers and children, are related to our cultural mindsets.

The *written* and *overt* curriculum is obviously the written instruction that is used in schools. This appears in guides, textbooks, teachers' daily plans, adopted teaching models, and state and federal mandates. All of these directly affect written and delivered instruction or instructional designs.

The *hidden* and *covert* curriculum refers to what surrounds children in schools and to the organization, the structure, the rules and regulations, and those aspects of the schooling process

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	that socialize students: competition, quiet, order, sequence, sitting still, accepted standards, behavioral rules and programs, compliance, consideration for others, and so on. Frequently, teachers are unaware that their practice is subtly manipulated by the agenda of the hidden curriculum. **The *null* curriculum is what we don't teach in schools, thus giving students the impression that certain things are not valued by our society. Examples include ethnically diverse literature and histories, works by female and ethnic/cultural minority authors, personal attributes such as compassion and empathy, aesthetic appreciation, exercises in stress reduction, and peace studies. Teachers are often unaware of the null curriculum and the very powerful messages that it gives students.** In Shelby's case, the written curriculum contained traditional Western subject areas, divided so that each area could be studied and tested separately. The classroom teacher was conscientiously attempting to prepare her students for the curriculum of junior high school, and she therefore ceased to integrate subjects, thus preventing students from seeing interrelationships. To accommodate these processes, convergent thought was highlighted, thus creating assignments that involved finding only specified right answers. Consequently, most of the processes these students used fell into the lower rung of Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives—knowledge, comprehension, and application. This instructional approach had advantages for the teacher. It ensured that students would be more likely to do well on standardized tests and that assignments could be graded easily.

For her creative writing lesson, Shelby did not use Hunter's Effective Teaching Model, a traditional pattern of stating the lesson objective at the very beginning of the exercise. She was hoping that the students would be able to see what objective had been reached at the end of the exercise. But the subtle messages of the classroom teacher's hidden curriculum told these students that they weren't supposed to reach into themselves to find this information—after all, defining objectives was the teacher's job. The hidden curriculum had taught habits of conforming behavior and thought and the extrinsic motivation of competition for grades and attention. By focusing on whole-class instruction and models that stressed retention, the classroom teacher had reinforced a very limited view of acceptable patterns for constructing knowledge.

This instructional pathway created a null curriculum in which divergent thought was not valued, all worthwhile assignments led to one correct response, and subjective grading was not valuable. The absence of creative thinking exercises, brainstorming activities, and exercises requiring divergent thinking had given the students a clear message that these exercises were of little value. The lesson that Shelby had created required divergent thinking as a lead-in to creative writing.

All of these curricula directly interfered with the success of Shelby's creative writing lesson. Once she realized what obstacles were barring the success of her lesson, she could have devised a plan to help her students recapture some of their spontaneity and creativity. This could have been accomplished (with at least some students) through many means—imagery exercises, brainstorming activities, or strategies using metaphoric thought. But the recovery process takes time, effort, and understanding.

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Many practicing teachers try to motivate creative thought and students' sense of aesthetic wonder. Some persevere and valiantly find ways around or through the common barriers. Unfortunately, many who fail in their initial attempts merely give up and give in. In doing so, these teachers add to the entrenchment of the typical mindset. They give in to null and hidden curricula that foster conformity and the loss of individual gifts. Longstreet and Shane (1993) point to two elements that they call *intragenerational disjunctures* and *vectors of change.*

Intragenerational disjunctures are not uncommon in our culture. Frequently, the older generation hesitates to change in the ways the younger generation deems necessary. As Longstreet and Shane so aptly observe,

> There is a profound difference between the change of the past centuries and that of the twentieth century. Up to the turn of this century the accelerating pace of change appears to have been within limits that would allow for reasonable continuity between one's childhood and the adult world. By 1929, to use the words of Alfred North Whitehead, technology had brought us to "the first period in human history in which it could not be assumed that each generation will live in an environment substantially similar to that of the preceding generation. (15)

Spectacular events throughout the twentieth century have catapulted successive generations into eras of rapid change without the benefit of appropriate preparation. We must constantly reorganize, update, and edit factual information so that it keeps pace with technological advances and the explosion of knowledge. This challenge requires students to learn to be extremely flexible, adaptive, imaginative,

critical, and innovative. Yet it is these attributes that are missing in our schools. Such attributes are not frills, trifles, or trendy caprices, but *survival skills*.

We are experiencing a period controlled by vectors of change. Longstreet and Shane define this condition:

> There are moments in history when the complex elements involved in change are so profound that the gradual course of cultural change is overwhelmed and a new cultural order, a sudden turning, or "vector," develops so swiftly that the traditional institutions no longer fulfill their functions. A great divide between the past and the present arises in the form of a vast cultural gap. . . . A vector of change represents such a marked departure of the present from the past as to be tantamount to a "system break," rendering many longstanding traditions ineffectual. This does not mean that the traditions disappear, but that they may continue to exist either without purpose or without meeting the purposes for which they were first developed. (8)

Examples of vectors are the unification of Germany, the break-up of the Soviet Union, and the reorganization of many European countries. All of these events required a sudden realignment of attitudes and positions.

The same types of events are taking place in the educational arena. Aspects of intelligence are being examined in new and different ways by such people as Howard Gardner of Harvard University (*Frames of Mind*) and Robert Sternberg of Yale (*Triarchic Intelligence*). Brain/mind research is providing dramatic new evidence on how the mind grows, learns, and creates knowledge. Multicultural issues are being incorporated into the curriculum as populations

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	other than those of European descent find their voices in America's public schools. Interactive computer technology, from simple tutorial programs to biological dissection simulations, is influencing the very ways in which students are being taught. The "inclusion" issue affects regular classroom teachers who work with children with learning or physical differences or disabilities. These and other issues are proving many traditional teaching methods to be ineffectual, counterproductive, and even cruel. An example of one of those time-honored methods that has come under scrutiny is "round robin reading." Historically, round robin reading served some practical purposes: it ensured that students had practice in reading aloud, a skill valued in early American society; it helped students who didn't have books; in a school where there were children at many different levels and of different ages, having the older students read aloud ensured that younger or slower students were exposed to the same materials. Today we can look at the process in a different light. For many students, reading aloud is stressful, even humiliating. Brain research tells us that anxiety shuts down the neocortex of the brain—that portion that makes us distinctly human and allows us to engage higher-level thinking skills. In essence, students end up not paying any attention to what they are reading, but just trying to get through the experience without dying from shock and discomfiture. Nor are students listening to what is being read by other students. Rather they are looking ahead, trying to learn or work out the words they will be reading so that they don't make fools of themselves before their peers. Why, then, has the round robin method persisted in an era when we should be well aware of its limitations?

Undoubtedly, there are teachers, parents, and students who have never considered the negative aspects of this tradition. As schools change, the careful examination of past, current, and possible future practices becomes an *imperative* function of teaching. In regard to round robin reading, we might ask, "Are there ways to use reading aloud and still make it a truly effective method of instruction? Are there ways to alter the procedure so that it is not threatening to students? Are there ways to teach children how to deal with the pressures of academic performance with innovation, insight, and certainty? Or are there other, more effective ways to teach students to read?"

Points of Reference: Observation

Observing children can provide tremendous insights. Teachers who are naturally keen observers are already ahead of the game, particularly if they have learned to make decisions based on extensive and systematic observation. It is imperative, especially at the beginning of children's schooling, that someone watch how they learn, interact, handle stress, move, talk, and create patterns. If we recognize and encourage students' natural gifts, they can become conduits for positive learning experiences. Teachers also must be vigilant regarding the diagnosis of learning problems, illnesses, emotional distress, and learning differences. Children who can't see or hear well, children whose eyes jump back and forth or whose eyes become strained and tired, students who are continually sick with earaches and colds or allergies, and children who have not been fed properly will have great difficulty keeping pace with their peers.

The revelations experienced during periods of observation often provide strong incentives for the observer to pursue answers to questions through

Joy in looking and comprehending is nature's most beautiful gift.

Albert Einstein

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active research or innovative program development. My own observations triggered a pursuit that led to many of the ideas and techniques I present in this book. I hope these personal experiences might remind you of your own experiences with children: they may trigger childhood memories, or they may be a catalyst for reflective analysis of family or personal educational experiences.

Encounters of the Wrong Kind

It was one of those awful, hectic weeks we dread—full of deadlines too close together for even brief periods of pause-and-collect-your-thoughts time. A long litany of "to dos" and "to gets" had been stuck on the refrigerator door, each item begging for immediate attention. And I'd foolishly wasted thirty precious minutes looking frantically for lost keys. Also missing was a receipt that I needed to return a gift that was the wrong size.

Calling the troops from a marathon coloring session, I begged for help in finding the errant items. "Kids, I need some help here. I've misplaced my car keys and a receipt for the shirt I bought Grandpa. It's yellow—not the shirt, the receipt—long and yellow."

Quickly explaining where I'd already looked, I tried to alleviate my panic by telling the kids to call the wayward objects. "Here, keys," they whistled. "Here, yellow receipt for Grandpa's ugly shirt," they shouted. Smiling and giggling, three girls, ages four, five, and seven, went off in several directions.

I could hear drawers opening, hangers rattling, more calling out, and then howls of laughter. Resigning myself to a more adult role in this escapade, I fixed a cup of herbal tea that was supposed to be calming, took some deep breaths, and rolled my neck back and forth, trying to release the nervous tension knots that were forming. Then I closed my

eyes and tried to visualize where I'd left the missing items. Sometimes this works, but not that day.

A few seconds later the house grew quiet—a bad sign. I found that my seven-year-old had abandoned the quest and had settled in to watch TV. Without the reward of an instant find, the game had gotten old too quickly. The five-year-old and her friend were sitting quietly on the stairs, eyes closed as if in a trance, holding their knees, rocking gently back and forth, and mumbling to one another in bits of unfinished thoughts.

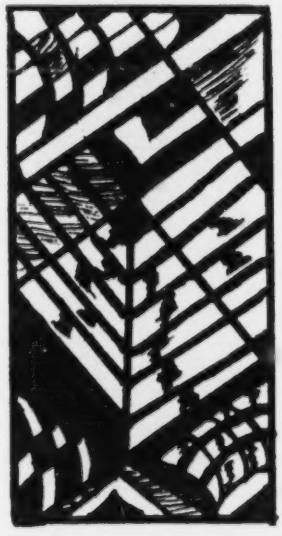
"We got out of the car," said my daughter.

Finishing the thought, her friend picked up the narrative—"Everybody got out of the car and was carrying a bag. Your Mom put down all her stuff and got her keys out of her coat pocket."

No sooner had the word *pocket* hit the air than both girls popped up and ran to the back door screaming. "Here they are—they're still in the lock."

I never leave my keys in the door! After admonishing myself, I made a quick mental note never to do that again. The three of us grabbed hands and circled, jumping up and down in celebration.

One down. Now, if we could just find the missing sales slip. Getting into the game, I closed my eyes, tried to bring up sequenced pictures of the events, and I found myself starting to remember, too. The pictures were very clear. We'd all got out of the car and were carrying in the bags of groceries. After I put the bags down on the counter, the kids hurried out to the car to retrieve more bags. Then we'd all started putting the groceries away. The phone rang in the middle of the foray, and I needed to write down a message but couldn't find a piece of paper. I picked up something yellow from a pile of things on the counter, turned it over, and wrote down the message. Immediately after I hung up the phone, I'd placed the message on the refrigerator amid all the other clutter.



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	During this period of recall the kids retraced my steps. Scouring the melange of paper on the frig, my youngest daughter grabbed the message scribbled on a longish sheet of pale blue paper—but the other side was yellow. I had inadvertently scribbled the message on the blue side of the sales slip. During my frantic hunt I'd walked past that piece of paper a dozen times without seeing it. Years later as I tried to concentrate on completing a series of intellectual chores that required intense quiet and concentration, I found myself continually interrupted by those same children. Now they could not find their things—shoes, books, papers, and jackets magically disappeared because of some unknown genii or spirit. "Mom, have you seen . . . " became a daily mantra. What happened to those beautiful children's acute abilities to recall sequences of events? Where had their visual memories gone? Initially I tried to console myself with the fact that both my daughters were terrific students, who, for the most part, appeared to like school. But this issue haunted and puzzled me. While researching children's development, I came upon some answers to these questions. In *Magical Child Matures* (Pearce 1986), I ran across a passage about children's "photographic" memories, the ability to remember visually the details of everyday objects, faces, places, actions, and environments. When children are taught to read, to spell, to calculate and manipulate symbols, to decipher words and numbers, most of them lose this ability. In essence, my children (as well as most of the rest of us) lost the gift of photographic memory because they learned to substitute symbols for things and events.

Processing Visual Information

I found an additional piece of the puzzle while researching how humans learn. I was reading a physician friend's copy of *Omni*—the scientific and medical version of the popular magazine. In some detail, this particular article talked about the brain's amazing efficiency. (Apparently, as our primary information processing and storage center, the brain naturally seeks the most effective way to store and process information.)

The article included a visual test in which a colorful dot appeared in the middle of a varied pattern. The directions instructed readers to stare at the dot for several minutes, then to close their eyes and try to recall the image, including the peripheral images. The article explained that while a person stares at an object for two or three minutes, the brain decides that the peripheral images are unimportant and focuses only on the visual field where the intense concentration has been directed. I verified this by taking the test, and I also began to notice that, as I worked on my computer or at my painting, my peripheral acuity greatly diminished.

Linking this information to that in the Pearce book, I realized that it was the human brain's natural commitment to efficiency that more than likely causes the progressive preference for symbolic information over complex visual memories. If I tried to remember the detail of every table I ever saw, more than likely my brain would become quickly overwhelmed with contextual pictures of various kinds of tables. It is much more efficient to remember the symbolic representations for objects than it is to store a battery of exact pictorial impressions.

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But is it possible for children to maintain some of their innate visual acuity in addition to acquiring symbolic proficiency? Is it a trade-off, a sacrifice that one has to make in order to be educated? Or could schools actually aid in the maintenance of photographic memory by allowing children to use visual skills and visual and imaginative activities?

Visual Gifts Ignored

My eldest daughter had been sick for several days when I made an appointment with her teacher to pick up her assignments so that she wouldn't fall too far behind. As I entered the classroom after school, I noticed something on the bulletin board that I thought was quite extraordinary. It was March and the bulletin board was covered with kites the students had made out of scraps of paper from old wallpaper samples.

One kite almost leapt off the board. From my vantage point of about thirty feet, I saw that the creator had painstakingly constructed a mask within the perimeters of the kite. The mask appeared three dimensional instead of two dimensional, and it had carefully detailed eyebrows, eyes with eyelids, a nose, a mouth, ears, and even cheekbones. As I approached the board for a closer look, the three dimensionality disappeared into an array of carefully arranged patterns, each feature highlighted or outlined with darker or more subtle patterns. I was amazed at both the subtlety and symmetry of the piece; I was overwhelmed that a student of eight or nine years could have constructed something with such arresting precision, and that the student had such a sense for amplitude that he or she had created distant dimensionality. Having dabbled in art throughout my life, I realized that this construction took not only careful planning but also the ability to perceive

the creation, while in the process of conception and constructing, from a distant vantage point. This student had a truly remarkable gift.

When I asked the teacher who had created the kite, she had no idea which creation I was talking about, but she got up to take a closer look. She lifted the side of the kite to reveal the name, Jason H., then sat back down as if she were not particularly interested in the creation and began gathering up my daughter's assignments. I couldn't let the issue fade that easily, and I asked her if she'd noticed that from a distance the kite was a multidimensional mask. Politely, she said that she hadn't noticed and appeared very disinterested, even irritated that I was so taken with the child's creation. Finally, she snapped that Jason had enough other problems and that he didn't need to be drawing all the time.

This particular school was in a small rural community. Usually, there was only one teacher per grade and the students who started out together graduated together. While this created a certain bond among the students, it also created a strong pecking order that tended to mirror the students' socioeconomic status. Most of the teachers in this system lived in the community and were well aware of whose parents were prominent citizens and whose were not.

In a small town, everybody knows everyone else's business. I knew that Jason's family situation was unstable and troubled. Jason had a reading problem, but he also showed early signs of being a terrific athlete and certainly appeared to have a gift for art. From my own teaching experiences, I knew that a specific talent could be used as a bridge and as motivation to promote success in other academic areas. A brief conversation with my daughter verified that Jason's peers respected his athletic prowess and were keenly aware of his artistic ability. She also told me

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NOTES	that Jason was always doodling or scribbling on something. When I asked if he often got in trouble, my daughter said he was pretty nice to everybody, but the teacher was always on his case about wasting "valuable time" drawing. Because I was a parent rather than an educator in this particular community, this child's learning problems, his gifts, or his self-image were not my concern, but the situation haunted me. I found myself talking to the principal after school one day about another matter. But as I knew that he too dabbled in art, I told him about Jason's kite-mask. He politely listened to my observations and comments. He even walked with me down to the classroom to take a look at Jason's creation. He appeared mildly impressed with the creation but then quickly dismissed the art issue to comment on the child's physical ability. He ended the conversation by observing that Jason needed to stop drawing so much and learn how to read. The fact that the child had a phenomenal gift for understanding spatial dimensions was dismissed as unimportant. I found myself appalled at the limited view of intelligence displayed by both Jason's teacher and the principal. A month later, I had an opportunity to go on a field trip with my daughter's class. During this trip I took a few minutes to talk to Jason about the construction of his kite-mask. I asked him how he knew that the patterns would create a three-dimensional effect from far away. The child closed his eyes and said quite seriously that when he's working on his art he can see it from different angles and sometimes even from far away in his mind. I then asked him if he'd draw something for me. On the way home on the bus Jason started drawing on a flattened paper bag. From the inside of the bus he drew the outside of the bus, complete with the shadowed drawings of passengers. Considering the conditions

under which he had to work, the sketch was quite good and the perspective and dimensions were certainly correct. He even included small details such as the worn letters on the side of the bus. The picture was given a title after he asked me to help with the spelling, and he signed it and gave it to me before we left the bus, obviously pleased that I had noticed his talent.

As I looked at Jason's picture and thanked him, it occurred to me to ask him if he'd had any formal art lessons. He said that he hadn't but that he had always liked to draw. He also said that when he was staying with his grandmother they would sometimes make up stories about what he drew. For several weeks after that trip, my daughter brought home pictures Jason had drawn for me.

Several years later, Jason's mother and stepfather were divorced and he moved away. I periodically remember this child and wonder what happened to him. Here was certainly a missed opportunity for teachers to have made a difference in the life of a child. But this story provides another piece of my puzzle. The people who could have had a positive impact on Jason's life and his educational future were severely limited in both their teaching approaches and their knowledge of the many dimensions of human intelligence. They were unwilling to look for gifts beyond those that had been identified by their own schooling experiences or by traditional definitions. They were hesitant to construct creative ways to help Jason or students like him. They could have investigated innovative methods of pedagogy that would have taken Jason's artistic and athletic strengths and used them to build his self-esteem and reach his academic weaknesses.

This incident made me even more aware that there must be better ways to educate children, to showcase their intrinsic gifts, and to build upon

One might say that the American trend of education is to reduce the senses almost to nil.

Isadora Duncan

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individual talents and interests. It also reinforced my views that activities in art, aesthetics, music, movement, imagery, perception, fantasy—activities that are fun, spontaneous, and creative—are all valuable experiences that have a place in a curriculum. These activities enhance the exploration of children's individuality and uniqueness—not just children like Jason, but all children.

A New Vision

The last two decades have seen the development and publication of a wonderful array of innovative educational theories, teaching models, and impressive data concerning how children learn and grow and how to help children learn better. All of this information is readily available to educational professionals through academic journals, teaching trade publications, curriculum guides, books, and conference presentations. Synopsized versions of this material are available to the general public through newspapers, television specials on education, and popular magazines.

In essence, there was no excuse for Jason's gift to go unrecognized by his teacher and principal or for these educators not to have the information to diagnose and remediate Jason's academic problems. But neither Jason's academic profile nor his social profile fit into his teachers' rather limited views of intelligence or giftedness. Perhaps if Jason's parents had been in a different socioeconomic strata the child's education would have been different. But that speculation has rather damning implications. Clearly, all children need to be regarded with reverence and viewed as valuable individuals.

Andy LePage (1987) addresses this issue in his work on educational transformation:

> Educators live out their own nobility and impart reverence in the way they conduct and teach in their schools. Showing respect to students, making sure that the curriculum is centered in the creative and that teaching methods make sense, and giving up demanding behavior, instills reverence in students. Showing a vision of wholeness, being an encouraging person, taking the time with students, making them feel important, and honoring them, recognizing the sacred character of their being also instills reverence in students.
>
> Reverence is catching. When one person shows respect to another, or to a creature or a rock, an example is given which ignites the tinder of the heart. Feelings of goodness are imparted. Care and concern become evident. Empowerment happens. People of reverence stand in awe of "what is"; they recognize its sacredness. They are profoundly concerned with life, with love, and with the pursuit of meaning and harmony in all they do.
>
> Education needs people of reverence to bring out the goodness that is in all students, to validate the creation, and to help create the structures whereby renewal in students and the educational system can take place. (53–54)

If Jason's teachers had treated him with appropriate reverence, the remedy to his difficulties could have been anything from a little T.L.C. to one of the excellent programs that involves learning styles accommodation. Or perhaps it would have been the use of an innovative educational program based on Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences. Gardner (1983) defines intelligence to include logical-mathematical, linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

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Jason obviously was spatially and kinesthetically intelligent. Who knows what he would have become if these gifts were recognized and valued early in his schooling experience?

Undoubtedly, many of you reading this book have your own stories about children who were lost to or in the institution of school. If we are to help children reach their full potential, educators must start looking at students differently from the way we have traditionally done. We must begin to recognize all of their many intelligences and special qualities.

The current wave of reform movements holds great promises and possibilities—solutions that will help many caring, thoughtful, reflective professionals reach, teach, and empower future generations. This thought is best stated by the English historian and philosopher Thomas Carlyle: "The great law of culture is to let each one become all that he was created capable of being; expand, if possible, to his full growth; and show himself at length in his own shape and stature, be these what they may."

PART TWO

To the Future

Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far as to believe that what ever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of questions can be satisfied.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

2
Previews

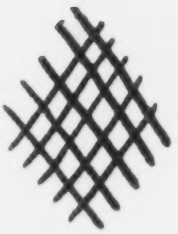
We have learned things which are not in the scripts. We have solved the secrets of which the Scholars have no knowledge. We have come to see how great is the unexplored, and many lifetimes will not bring us to the end of our quest.

Ayn Rand

Seeking an Alternative View

Many readers may feel, as I do, that education is much more than advancing students through years of standardized tests. Indeed, the word *education* is from the Latin, *educare*, and although it can mean "to impart knowledge," one of its more powerful definitions is "the process of immersion into the development of knowledge, of mind, or of character; or even the ability of being drawn or led out."

In the fast approaching world of the twenty-first century, students will need the ability to think critically, to solve problems through the synthesis and the analysis of ideas and alternatives; the ability to deal effectively with cultural patterns different from their own in a multicultural arena; and the ability to be innovative, inventive, and intuitive. Students will need to integrate knowledge and factual information into new and different designs and patterns, develop an attitude of reverence and stewardship for the Earth, and tolerate and anticipate change.



It is because modern education is so seldom inspired by a great hope that it so seldom achieves a great result. The wish to preserve the past rather than the hope of creating the future dominates the minds of those who control the teaching of the young.

Bertrand Russell

Many students already know that they will need these types of skills. They have learned this from their parents, siblings, and other family members; from their peers and through the "phantom" curricula (television and popular media); and from their own private reflections on their futures. Often the processes inherent in the factory model of school anger those students who want to make a difference in the world. For children who instinctively know what it will take to prepare them for the future, the endless repetitive tasks of an outmoded model are frustrating.

David Elkind (1988) addresses students' helplessness in changing the model and the practice of teaching: "Unfortunately, children do not organize, have no access to the media, and do not vote. They are relatively powerless to improve their condition. Children need adults who will advocate for them" (xv). Teachers who recognize the need to change their practice and the various curricula schools teach have the potential to be very powerful advocates for children. Many such teachers will be able to recognize and acknowledge that there is an element of deep promise in all children—that children have unique qualities that deserve to be drawn out and developed as a core part of the schooling experience.

Aristotle's belief in the senses as the primary source of knowledge is the foundation of scientific method—discovering knowledge guided by facts gathered through the senses.

Since Descartes and Newton, we have been preoccupied with scientific methods; we have learned the importance of looking at elements in discrete pieces in order to study them better. These methods have been applied to studying almost every aspect of human learning. But children are more than organisms in stimulus-response experiments, more than

varied collections of discrete parts, and learning is more than delineated categories of taxonomies.

The German word *gestalt* becomes useful in this context. There is no direct translation, but a close meaning is "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." When gestalt psychology is applied to education, the process of learning is seen as interactive. The child is seen as having an impact on the environment, and the environment and its elements are seen as interacting with the learner. This implies that teachers need to be aware of the possibilities of children's gifts, of human differences, of developmental stages, of children's needs, of their dreams, and their fears. Education from this point of view is an experience for both the learner and the teacher. It is a mutual exchange.

We can find the gestalt perspective in many promising new educational paradigms (models, patterns, or designs) and theories that could revolutionize both the practice and the promise of American education. Holistic education has various definitions and people have various perceptions of the concept. R. Griffin (1981) offers an accurate, generic description:

> Holistic education . . . is an education which seeks to provide for the development of the student in mind, body and spirit. It is an education which aims at the integration of elements: self and world; mind and body; knowing and feeling; the personal and societal; the practical and transcendent. It sees the enrichment of the student's self-understanding and the enhancement of the student's sense of self-worth as providing the basis for the realization of these goals. (111)

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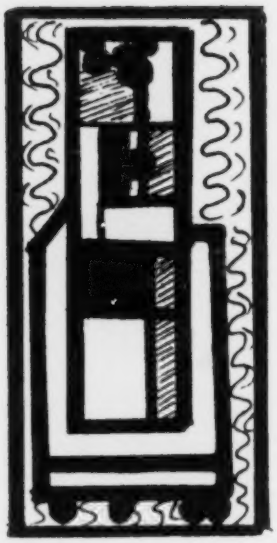

In defining her perceptions for potentializing the mental capacities of learners in a more holistic manner, Barbara Clark (1983, 1986) created the Integrative Education Model. It is important to note that her model is not the same as a true holistic model. Commenting on the directions of paradigm shifts, Clark states that new designs for learning will include

1. A focus on an integration of all human functions, including the logical, rational thought; the important avenues of sensing; the emotional, feeling functions; and the power of intuitive knowing. . . .

2. The use of relaxation and tension-reduction to develop higher levels of learning, i.e. whole brain learning, as relaxation has been found to be the first step in thinking and synchronizing brain functions.

3. The use of the environment as an important learning tool with color, sound, light, etc., contributing to the learning process. . . .

4. A focus on individual learning needs, styles and processes in small group or individual instruction. . . .

5. A focus on responsiveness to the interest and ability of each learner's choice as a powerful motivator in developing the curriculum. . . .

6. That content be communicated by cooperative processes and interactions of the teacher and learner as both hemispheres of the brain must be involved for optimal learning to occur.

7. Encouragement of new ways of viewing facts, eliciting new questions and presentations of, as yet, unresolved issues which allow the learner to use higher cortical function.

8. A focus on empowering the student to be responsible for self. . . . (66–67)

While integrated education resembles educational holism in that both emphasize personal synergy, *there is a difference.* Holistic education emphasizes the importance of each learner's personal qualities. It stresses the importance of the spiritual and aesthetic aspects of children and reveres the unique potential of each learner. Although both integrated and holistic models are concerned with the integration of the total human, the underlying goals of the models differ. Clark's model shows the close parallels between the two models.

The integrated model or whole-brain model is intended to be practical, seeking to *increase the potential* of the learner through the *wholeness of the mind.* The holistic model seeks to *revere the wholeness of the learner as a unique member of the universe,* increasing the development of the mind's potential along the way. These distinctions are subtle but important. For the purposes of this work, holism approaches learning from a more spiritual perspective than does Clark's integrated model. In this work the term *spirit* refers to that life spark, that sense of consciousness, our individual persona, that defines us as humans. The tenets of holistic education do not say all functions are equal, but all the positive functions should have opportunities to develop within an educationally supportive environment. Holistic education does not deny the quest for personal excellence, nor does it deny that humans need certain basic skills. It is not

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Great spirits have often encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.

Albert Einstein

a passing fad. Its foundations are an outgrowth of a documented past and are recorded in a distinguished procession of educational, societal, and psychological reformers. Educational holism is not eclectic; rather, it is selectively collective. The common theme in holistic practices is the reintegration of all the human components and patterns that have been historically separated by scientific educational theorists. As R. Griffin (1981) states, "Human beings are unified being[s], constantly in interaction with a physical and social environment, a being-in-the world system in which each element within and without the individual operates concurrently with the others and has an impact on the other" (112).

The Waldorf Example

There are some schools that provide successful examples of how to accommodate individuals in a holistic context. Steiner's Waldorf School is one system that has attempted to address the needs of the whole child. The original Waldorf School was established outside Stuttgart by Emil Molt. Molt invited Steiner, an Austrian philosopher, scholar, and educator, to head the school in 1919. As head of the Waldorf Education Movement, Steiner was concerned with educating the whole child: mind, body, and spirit. His curriculum reflects the aim "to achieve unity—balance between the science, the humanities and the arts" (Glas 1981, 7). In discussing Steiner's innovations, Foster (1984) points out, "Learning experiences are designed to involve the whole human being and an unusual emphasis is placed on art, music, hard work and faculty governance" (230). Autonomous Waldorf schools now exist in more than eighteen countries, with more than twenty in the United States.

In a recent conversation, I asked a professor of German how the Waldorf schools are regarded in Germany. My friend replied that Waldorf schools have excellent reputations. German parents must place their children's names on a waiting list as soon as they are born. It is interesting that in the comparative statistics that tout the superiority of German schools over American schools, the comparisons are to students in the state systems, not to children in private Waldorf schools. But if the German state system is superior, why are so many German parents seeking alternative forms of educational experiences for their children?

Although Waldorf education began in the 1920s, the curriculum and school philosophies remain current. Some of Steiner's educational innovations and principles of practice include an emphasis on children's developmental stages; cross-age grouping; a concern with the personal styles of learners; a thematic curriculum approach with subject matter integration; the view that pedagogy is an art, not a science; a recognition that cognition can be enhanced by intuitive, artistic, and sensory experiences; the recognition that learning is enhanced by physical movement and that language acquisition is advanced by immersion in literature, poetry, rhyme, and song.

While Rudolf Steiner's (1937, 1943, 1948) personal writings emphasize the spiritual and mystical nature of children, they also provide a successful, global context for educating whole children. His work combined with the work of a number of other important educators provides a useful synthesis that reflects the foundations of holistic education. Such education, which has its roots in humanistic, confluent, progressive, and transpersonal education, also reflects current brain/mind research.

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The Design

As I stated, educational holism builds upon a philosophically selective base. Its design can be defined broadly by what has been chosen to be included. There is a broad array of concepts from which educators can select as they develop and construct learning experiences. Teachers at different stages in their professional, philosophical development have numerous entry points into this unique paradigm. Many of the ideas inherent in the design dovetail with one another so that there is a natural progressive flow that provides a comprehensive framework for teaching and learning. These collective selections make it different from other models. Following is a list of holistic principles as I outlined them (Wilson 1990):

1. **Recognition of each human being's uniqueness.** The encouragement of students to discover their true potential, to value their personal qualities, and to understand and value the qualities of others.

2. **Recognition of the hidden potential of the brain/mind and the fostering of its connection with other body systems.**

3. **Recognition of various ways of knowing as important and the fostering of linear and nonlinear methods of learning.** Holistic practices encourage the use of the imagination, creativity, intuition, centering activities, relaxation, meditation, guided imagery, dream exploration, physical encoding, and storytelling as possible ways of learning and knowing.

4. **Recognition of the importance of style preferences in learning.** Holistic education encourages self-discovery.

5. **Acknowledgment of the learning environment as important.** Holistic practices stress the use of a stimulus-rich environment that is responsive to the individual's learning needs, styles, and preferences. The emphasis is on small group and individual instruction, rather than on whole group instruction. The environment supports a variety of activities that will appeal to both brain hemispheres. Cross-age grouping and contact with the community are supported.

6. **A view that the learning procedures and curriculum are cooperative processes between learner and teacher, between home and community, between child and world.** The teacher becomes the learner and the learner becomes the teacher. Emphasis is on cooperative relationships.

7. **The use of educational techniques that encourage students to engage the whole brain.** These techniques encourage divergence and convergence, finding and asking questions, finding and solving problems, tolerating ambiguity, and anticipating the future.

8. **The development of self-esteem and self-actualization, individual assessment, internal locus of control, and life-long learning.**

Holistic teachers see play as a way for students to make cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Play enriches the imagination, provides opportunities for developing originality, and strengthens the individual's ability to cope with problems and the unexpected. Play is an essential element in community life.

Ralph Peterson

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9. **Emphasis on learning as a process, a journey. The processes are paramount to the content.** Holistic designs stress learning how to learn.

10. **Emphasis on humans' compatibility with nature—recognizing our relationship to the universe, teaching reverence for the patterns within self and the universe.**

11. **Encouragement of students to meld the random and sequential, the global and analytical, the rational and intuitive; emphasis on the search for internal and external patterns within the context of the whole.**

Integrating the Feminine

As complete as it may seem, however, the research on holistic educational design may be overlooking an important element. I believe that part of the unspoken mission inherent in holistic practices is the attempt to recapture what Carl Jung referred to as the *anima*—the feminine portion of the soul. Jung believed that each of us has potential for inward balance between our animus (masculine nature) and our anima (feminine nature). This idea reflects the Eastern concepts of yin (female) and yang (male).

Along with U.S. industrialization and material success came a separation of the sexes. U.S. society came to value masculine qualities that led to greater wealth and power. As American women move out of the home and into the work force, however, society has been forced to look at new points of view. Women have become a political force and are active in every aspect of the work force, and they have used their newfound power to garner respect for some

feminine qualities that were previously not considered valuable. This trend has pushed many members of our traditionally male-dominated society to re-evaluate and rethink the gifts inherent in women. New perspectives and dialogues about balancing the positive attributes of male and female are also reflected in the design of holistic educational practices.

Many attitudes and tasks that have been traditionally considered female or "maternal" are inherent in holistic education. Nurturing behavior, intuition and insight, concern with learning environments, and other concepts have long been appreciated by such authors and teachers as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Parker, Steiner, and Hill-Smith. Many of them recommend that perceptions, practices, and learning environments for children be softened or "feminized." The female influence in holistic practices is thus another *selective*, but unaddressed, component of its design. It is a promising model that incorporates new scientific concepts and is worthy of our attention as we enter the new millennium.

The Multiple Intelligences

Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences is incorporated in the exercises in this book. Gardner is a Harvard scholar who studied Jean Piaget's definition of children's cognitive processes. Through his own work on the development of cognition, Gardner came to view Piaget's work as being too narrowly focused. Gardner's innovative theory offers us a new framework for considering the gifts of children.

Through studying cultural definitions of intelligence and anthropological data, and through his own observations of children, Gardner defined seven intelligences. He contends that all normal humans have each intelligence to some degree, but some individuals have amplified skills in certain intelligences.

Children are not there primarily for us. We are there primarily for them. Yet they come to us bearing a gift: the gift of experiencing the possible. Children are children because they are in the process of becoming. They experience life as possibility. Parents and teachers are good pedagogues when they model possible ways of being for a child. They can do that if they realize that adulthood itself is never a finished project. Life forever questions us about the way it is to be lived. "Is this what I should be doing with my life? Is this how I should spend my time?" No one can reawaken these questions in us more powerfully and more disturbingly than a child. All that is required is that we listen to children and learn from them. In this, children are our teachers.

Max Van Manen

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	While Gardner's work already has received broad acceptance in educational arenas, he has gone on to explore additional areas of intelligence. It is quite possible that we may eventually view human intelligence in an even more expanded way than Gardner's initial theory postulates. Perhaps we will include spiritual intelligence, empathic intelligence, humor intelligence, healing intelligence, and the like. Currently, Gardner's written works identify seven specific intelligences.

Gardner's Intelligences Defined

Gardner's *Frames of Mind* (1983) thoroughly describes each of the seven intelligences. The following descriptions are based on his work as well as the work of David Lazear, Bob Samples, and Thomas Armstrong (see the bibliography for full citations).

VERBAL-LINGUISTIC intelligence deals with abilities in the complex acquisition, formation, and processing of language. Thinking symbolically and reasoning abstractly fall under this category, as does the ability to create conceptual verbal patterns. Reading, writing, the development of symbolic writing and language skills—anagrams, palindromes, metaphors, similes, puns, and analogies—come under this intelligence. Children who talk early, who enjoy making sounds and rhyming patterns, who are prolific readers and have good memories for poetry, lyrics, tongue twisters, and verse may have a propensity in this area. They learn by verbalization, by seeing and hearing words, and usually enjoy word games. (Samples places verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical skills in one category, abstract-symbolic intelligence.)

LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL intelligence deals with the ability to think logically, inductively (and to some degree deductively), and categorically; to recognize patterns, both geometric and numerical; and to see and work with abstract concepts. Children who are strong in this intelligence may be constant questioners; they may easily grasp games that involve sophisticated strategies, such as chess; or they may devise experimental formats to test their ideas. Also, they may be fascinated with computers or with puzzles that involve logic and reasoning abilities.

SPATIAL intelligence deals with the ability to perceive images or mental models and to use those models in reality. These children think in images and are usually the ones able to find missing objects due to their tremendous powers of visual recall. They may be the first to notice things that have been changed or rearranged. Many draw early and are delighted with shapes, lines, and colors.

These folks are attracted to jigsaw puzzles, mazes, and find-the-hidden-picture puzzles, and they love to construct things with blocks. They have an early sense of proportion and perspective. They are also good at reading and constructing maps and discerning objects as they might appear in three-dimensional space. They are often referred to as daydreamers—they may stare off into space. (David Lazear and Bob Samples have adapted Gardner's work to include visual intelligence. See Resource Guide for specific references.)

MUSICAL intelligence deals with the ability to create or interpret music. These children may need to listen to music while they study, and they are

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frequently humming, singing, tapping out rhythms, or whistling. They have keen ears for distinguishing sounds and subtle nuances in music and in the sounds in their environments. These children can also be excellent mimics and can easily discern differences in speech patterns or accents. (David Lazear expands this group by using the descriptor "rhythmic," and Bob Samples describes this as auditory intelligence.)

BODILY-KINESTHETIC intelligence deals with physical movement, both fine motor skills and the large muscle systems. These children are the movers of the universe, and frequently they squirm, rock, even fall off their chairs when required to sit still for extended periods of time. These children are adept at creating and interpreting gestures and are often good at communicating with or reading others' body language. They may even have a need to enter the personal space of or touch others while communicating. These students need to learn by acting and moving, to learn by haptic experiences.

INTERPERSONAL intelligence deals with the ability to understand and communicate with others and to facilitate relationships and group processes. The phrase "they can work the room" aptly describes their uncanny ability to read people. Often these children are highly empathic, and they can arbitrate differences among people or groups. They can easily pick up on the vibrations, the feelings, of others. These children enjoy cooperative learning experiences and learn best in such settings. (Bob Samples refers to this type of intelligence as synergic-personal.)

INTRAPERSONAL intelligence deals with the ability to be somewhat insulated from one's peers, to have a strong sense of self, to have the ability to make decisions that may not be popular with others. This strong sense of self creates a certain amount of immunity from peer pressure. These children may be what are described as "loners." They may have gifts out of the ordinary realm of human understanding—strong intuitive feelings, a sense of inner wisdom or precognition. These children need learning experiences wherein they can focus on their inner being and activities that allow them to work by themselves on materials and projects of their own choosing. (Bob Samples calls this the ability to be synergic-natural.)

American schools seem to have few problems meeting the needs of students who have strong verbal-linguistic or logical-mathematical intelligences. But even in special programs that are designed for "gifted" students, many of Gardner's intelligences are not recognized or acknowledged as important or valued gifts. For example, although physical giftedness appeared in the initial federal definitions of "gifted," it was removed during the 1970s. Supposedly, schools meet the needs of physically gifted children through expensive sports programs. While this is undoubtedly true for those students displaying physical traits compatible with the narrow needs of established sports, it is not true that all kinesthetically gifted students are served by schools' athletic programs. Students who are gifted in dance, mime, gymnastics, small-muscle movements, performance arts, table tennis, and so forth are virtually ignored by many school programs. Many programs also require fees for extracurricular activities, excluding those who cannot afford the

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So far, we do not seem appalled at the prospect of exactly the same kind of education being applied to all the school children from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but there is an uneasiness in the air, a realization that the individual is growing less easy to find; an idea, perhaps, of what standardization might become when the units are not machines, but human beings.

Edith Hamilton

fees, or do not have complete programs for girls. For those who have gifts in the spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences, schools offer even less accommodation and usually little or no recognition. And yet at a global level, history and anthropology point to other cultures, past and present, where there was and is profound appreciation and educational encouragement for those children who had different forms of intelligence. These intelligences are and were perceived as valuable in themselves, and children possessing these special traits have been provided both encouragement and reward.

American culture and its educators often fail to realize that students who possess intelligences other than verbal-linguistic and mathematical-logical can be readily reached through their unique gifts. Each different gift of intelligence thus becomes a conduit for other types of learning. For example, children who are musical could be taught mathematics through the many variations of their preferred mode. Musical notation, tempo, rhythm, and meter can be (and often are) translated into forms or types of mathematical notation. Additionally, rhymes, rhythms, raps, chants, and jump rope songs can be used to teach mathematical facts such as times tables and geometric theorems. Such bridges into the minds of children are limited only by the imagination of each child's teachers.

Jason is a good example of the disparity that may exist between children with special gifts and the services offered by specialized school programs. Although Jason has phenomenal spatial intelligence and gave continued evidence of his gift, his form of intelligence was not acknowledged and certainly not served through special programs or individual accommodation.

As with many children with special ways of knowing, if Jason's form of intelligence had been recognized and valued, his teachers could have used his natural gifts to help him create bridges to other areas. Jason's artistic abilities could have been used to illustrate stories—much like filmmakers' storyboards. From this simple beginning, Jason could have used his gift to create original stories, and from his words and descriptions he could have learned how to become a better reader. Again, in the area of social studies, Jason could have entered the world of history and geography through the portal of his art. His talents could have helped him identify, differentiate, and reproduce the intricate and complex shapes of landmasses, inlets, mountains, fjords, and the like. He could have discovered the genius and tempo of a time through its works of art and architecture. These are samples of keys that would have helped this child unlock the world and knowledge through his own special brand of intelligence.

While children with less recognized modes of intelligence continue to be ignored by most educational institutions, children who are identified as gifted in verbal or mathematical (and related) skills receive accelerated or enriched programs and extra academic attention, which allow their gifts to flourish. Specialized programs feed these students' self-esteem and foster important personal growth.

Stephen Nachmanovitch (1990), commenting on the importance of play and improvisation in the development of creativity, offers a powerful metaphor to help us perceive the relationship of Gardner's theory to our rigid societal and educational expectations.

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Persons are gifts . . . wrapped!

Some are wrapped beautifully; they are attractive when I first see them.

Some come in ordinary wrapping paper.

Others have been mishandled in the mail.

Once in a while there is a special delivery!

Some persons are gifts that are very loosely wrapped, not sealed.

Others are tightly wrapped, practically locked, enigmas, almost forbidding.

But the wrapping is not the gift!

Anonymous

> The conformity that is taught by the big school that surrounds us resembles what biologists call a monoculture. If you walk in a wild field you see dozens of different species of grasses, mosses, and other turf in each square yard as well as a rich supply of tiny animals. This is nature's assurance that changes in climate and environment will be matched by requisite variety in the plant life. But if you walk in a domesticated field you will see only one or a few species. Domesticated animals and plants are genetically uniform because they are bred for a purpose. Diversity and flexibility are bred out in exchange for maximizing certain variables that suit our purpose. But conditions change, and the species is locked into a narrow range of variety. Monoculture leads to a loss, invariably to a loss of options, which leads to instability. Monoculture is an anathema to learning. The exploratory spirit thrives on . . . variety and free play. (118)

Gardner's work is a break from the traditional monocultural view to a more polycultural view. Additionally, while Gardner's contention is that all "normal" humans possess, to some degree, all seven intelligences, we actually possess infinite resources if you consider the great variety of ways the intelligences are interwoven in individuals. This spectacular array of human variability provides a new perspective and a source of strength as we engage in an educational quest to overcome the dangers of monocultural instability. Gardner's work helps educators peek beyond the wrappings and look inside to discover those gifts that are waiting to be revealed and cultivated.

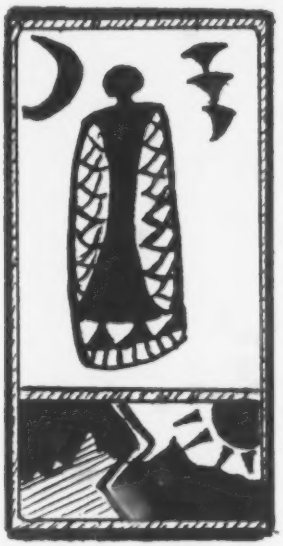
Aesthetic Education

A key concept in the development of the activities in this book is the importance of aesthetic experiences, particularly in the process of revising education. At the outset, I want to make some important distinctions among these terms: *aesthetics, the aesthetic,* and *aesthetic education*. Traditionally, the word *aesthetics* is defined as either the study of or the responses to "beauty." It also refers to a distinct conceptual branch of philosophy that deals with art, the criticism of the arts or creative sources, and the effects of the arts. In the minds of those concerned with philosophy aesthetics is a specific study in its own right and educationally different from "aesthetic experiences." *The aesthetic* (whether in relation to the arts or anything else) is what humans have come to know as "aesthetic experience" or experiences that lead to the appreciation of, involvement in, development of, understanding of, or creation of beauty or beautiful things. *Aesthetic education* refers to those experiences that develop discriminating appreciation of, involvement with, or understanding for art (used in the broader sense) and beauty. The activities in this book deal with aesthetic education and the development and appreciation of aesthetic experiences.

People of all cultures and times appear to have strong needs for aesthetic experiences. Humans actively seek experiences that involve either the creation of or reverence for that which is beautiful. Often, aesthetic experiences are directly responsible for states of human ecstasy. Most frequently, our involvement with the aesthetic is through creative endeavors in the arts—painting, sculpture,

Art is to society as dreams are to people.

Laliberte and Kehl



music, song, dance, verse, prose, and even more ordinary, everyday media. We embellish our environments, our utensils, our clothing, our bodies, our artifacts, our gardens. We are often consumed with creating what may be conceived by others in our culture as beautiful. And whether through artifact, event, or experience, with ecstasy or awe, collective human history reflects millennia of seeking aesthetic experiences through reverence, creation, appreciation, contemplation, and discourse. As John A. Michael (1983) notes in his discussion on the importance of arts in the lives of adolescents, "Aesthetic experience is a basic phenomenon of our lives, of which many of us are not consciously aware. It is believed that our nervous system subconsciously orders our perceptions—what we see, hear, touch, smell, taste—and assimilates these in an integrative way, filing them away in some manner so that we can effectively operate in the world" (75).

Therefore, one contention of this book is that we need to allocate time in our schools for the purposeful, deliberate development of children's innate aesthetic needs. We also need to allocate time for the intentional expansion of children's aesthetic experiences.

Viktor Lowenfeld and W. Lambert Brittain (1970), experts in the development of creative growth and children's artistic evolution, explain the importance of the aesthetic for children. They define the aesthetic as

> the means of organizing thinking, feeling, and perceiving into an expression that communicates . . . thoughts and feelings to someone else. The organization of words we call prose or poetry, the organization of tones we call music, the organization of body movements we call dance, and the

> organization of lines, shapes, color and form make up art. There are no set standards or rules that are applicable to aesthetics; rather, the aesthetic criteria are based on the individual, the particular work of art, the culture in which it is made, and the intent or purpose behind the art form. There is a tremendous variety of organization in art. We find that an aesthetic form is not created by the imposition of any external rule but rather that a creative work grows by its own principles. In the creative products of children, aesthetic growth is shown by a sensitive ability to integrate experiences into a cohesive whole. (31)

Much of what we know about the human condition comes from psychological studies of abnormal or dysfunctional human behavior. From the study of the abnormal, psychologists often postulate the reverse to describe what they consider to be normal behavior. However, the work of third force psychologist Abraham Maslow is very different. Unlike many of his colleagues, Maslow (1943, 1968, 1987) wanted to know what it was that made people successful, happy, fulfilled. He focused his work on studying humans who had fulfilling or "self-actualizing" lives. He defined the need for self-actualization as the innate need to develop one's talents and capabilities.

Through his studies of successful, contented people Maslow identified two needs that motivate people. As he categorized and classified these needs, Maslow found that humans are intrinsically motivated to find fulfillment or to become self-actualized. Based on his observations and findings, Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs that leads to the condition of self-actualization. His now famous hierarchy places deficiency needs at the most basic levels and progresses through those needs to the higher-level growth needs in this order: physiological needs,

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safety needs, loving and belonging needs, esteem needs, the desire to know and understand, and aesthetic needs.

Maslow's hierarchy can be applied to the general areas of an individual's life as well as to specific, compartmentalized areas. In other words, a person developing toward self-actualization can reach that state in one or more areas without reaching it in other areas. For example, a person might be highly developed, even self-actualized, in his professional life but not in his family life or his spiritual life. Ideally, individuals would lead balanced lives so that they are striving to meet growth needs at all junctures. The importance of Maslow's work here is that it highlights the human need to experience the aesthetic as the pinnacle of human growth needs.

Although Maslow arranges human needs hierarchically, I see humans, especially children, as moving in and out of their need for the aesthetic. I agree that it is extremely difficult for people whose basic physiological and safety needs are not met to be concerned with the aesthetic. Nevertheless, the aesthetic is a deep and integral part of being human. It is a concept that slips into our lives, even sometimes in the midst of misery and deprivation. Perhaps most humans experiencing the ravages of war or struggling to survive may not see the beauty of a vibrant sunset, but even under horrid conditions, there are those who manage to retain their appreciation for such beauty.

Many years ago one of my neighbors was a divorceé with two children. I soon became painfully aware that, as in many such cases, the wounds in this family were very deep. The yelling and overt agitation indicated a great deal of friction between siblings and between parent and children. One of the children, a nine-year-old boy, appeared to be suffering the most. He was often dressed in dirty clothes, hands and face grimy and unwashed, and

he frequently smelled of urine. Sometimes he forgot his key and had to wait hours for someone to come home and let him in the house. He also seemed to be friendless. Certainly there were major rips in the mantel of this child's physiological and safety needs, but despite these rifts it became apparent that he had deep aesthetic needs.

One day I put up my wind chime collection, and several hours later when I came outside to empty the garbage, I found this little boy sitting on the bumper of my car listening, concentrating with his eyes closed, to the tinkling of the chimes. He had a calm expression on his face, and when he heard me rustling around the garbage cans, he said with a wistful sigh, "These make the most beautiful sounds I've ever heard. I feel like I must be listening to angels."

After that I often found this child sitting peacefully near the chimes, just listening to their music. He seemed to find some sort of renewal in the ecstasy provided by the chimes as they echoed nature's melodies. This was an expression of the power of humans' need for aesthetic experiences, a need that can appear despite life's misery. And it showed the power of aesthetic experiences for children.

Many of the exercises and explorations in this book are devoted to helping children find or produce such moments of escape, even of ecstasy, through their discovery of the aesthetic. The explorations in part 2 are a synthesis of elements from all three of the key concepts I have discussed—holistic learning, multiple intelligences, and aesthetic experiences. I hope they will provide effective ways for educators to help children reach their innate potential.

Come to the edge,
he said.
Come to the edge,
he said.
They said:
We are afraid.
Come to the edge,
he said.
They came.
He pushed them . . .
and they flew.

Guillaume Apollinaire

3

Promises

A User's Guide

I never teach my students. I only provide the conditions in which they learn.

Albert Einstein

Intentions

Children come to the world as precious gifts. They must be nurtured with care in an atmosphere of respect and reverence. They should be valued for their individuality and uniqueness. Some teachers know this. These teachers realize that children grow at different rates and in different ways, and they recognize the importance of developmental stages. These teachers, be they professionals or parents, also realize that children come to school with a wealth of individual experiences and that learning is a shared exchange between teacher and child.

Teachers should frequently regenerate, restore, revise, realign, and refresh their sense of pedagogy, their professional artistry, their views, and their commitments to children. To that end I offer the next portion of this book as a resource guide of suggested activities for elementary teachers. Sometimes it helps to have a jumping-off place or an idea bank. These ideas are meant to open doors, to motivate, to suggest, to provide a source for discovery and exploration.

Grown-ups never understand anything for themselves; it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

It is important also to say that you must be discriminating as you choose activities that enhance your instructional objectives and educational agendas. Since you must discern what works best for you and your students, I invite you to alter, adapt, incorporate, integrate, or embellish the suggested activities in relation to your needs.

I have designed these activities for the whole child. They are meant to expose students to the universe within as well as to open doors to the universe surrounding us. The activities are based on the principles of holistic education, multiple intelligences, and aesthetic experiences, because these principles assume that the child is a total person—mind, body, and spirit—who is capable of a social consciousness.

The Importance of Blueprints

In his famous treatise *Emile,* Jean-Jacques Rousseau notes that the development of children's minds and bodies unfolds in certain ways; children are very different from adults. This "ages and stages" approach to understanding children began an educational revolution and is part of the natural patterns incorporated into holistic education. Of course, while it is true that there is a natural progression in the lives of children, it is important to remember that these stages are not distinct breaks; there are areas of transition in which children weave back and forth from simpler stages to more advanced stages. Also, each child has his or her own developmental clock, which is determined by environment, heredity, and internal and external forces.

Public schools cannot change hereditary factors and the home environment, but they can provide experiences that enhance children's natural gifts, and educators do have control over the immediate classroom environment. Through these influences,

schools and teachers directly affect students' self-esteem and self-concepts. Teachers are powerful, and those who want to be positive forces accept their role with a great sense of responsibility, knowing that they have a direct impact on the lives and psyches of children, sometimes forever.

The Stages—A Refresher Course

Elementary school coincides with children's development into and out of the middle childhood stage and is a developmental time span encompassing a number of levels. As you review these ages and stages, remember that transitions are based on normative data, and there will always be exceptions to the rules.

I have found that adults often either underestimate or overestimate children's capacity for understanding. I remember discussing the concept of a solar eclipse with my own children. As an educator, I knew that they were probably too young developmentally to understand solar schema, but news items on an upcoming partial eclipse had triggered a series of thoughtful questions. One day I took advantage of a "teachable moment" to demonstrate the eclipse concept. Using objects at hand—assorted balls and oranges and grapefruits and a flashlight—I transformed my kitchen table into a mini–solar system. The lesson lasted all of fifteen minutes and included physical encoding, as I first had the children rotate and revolve around the table and then do the same thing with the objects. The demonstration appeared to interest the children and they asked some pertinent questions about revolution, rotation, and planetary positions. Although I was pleased with their immediate interest, I had little confidence that they had understood the concept fully. After all, they were at Piaget's preoperational stage.

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Effective learning means arriving at new power, and the consciousness of new power is one of the most stimulating things in life.

Janet Erskine Stuart

A few days later I overheard my five-year-old explaining the concept to a group of friends. Using her playmates and a collection of large balls and a stool filled with every flashlight she could find as stellar objects, she aptly demonstrated the eclipse principles we had previously discussed. She was able to transfer the mini schema of the table to a concept on a larger scale. This enactment became a dance—the children, the balls rotating and revolving until she yelled "stop" and barked orders for the Earth representative, who was using a ball as her moon, to stand still so that the others could see how eclipses were produced by the blockages and shadows. She then took the ball and became the Earth so that her friend could see the same patterns. I was amazed, and the observation taught me a valuable lesson about children's capacity for understanding.

Like much of life, the art of teaching involves walking a fine line—finding that balance between appropriate responses and teaching techniques that meet the students' capacity for understanding. I've found that it is important to offer concrete examples, metaphors or similes, or illustrative examples while teaching difficult and abstract concepts. No matter what the ages of my students, they appear to appreciate help to enter the world of formal thinking. Even my undergraduates and my graduate students seem to value this technique.

Although Piaget's theory offers a great deal as a basis for understanding the cognitive development of ages and stages of children and adolescents, Piaget may have underestimated the abilities of children in the concrete operational stage. And he also may have overestimated many adolescents' and adults' capacities to understand abstractions without the support of illustrations, metaphors, or concrete examples. Some research supports this view (Fischer and

Knight 1990). As you use the activities in this book, you may find yourself walking a fine line between realistic expectations and wonderful surprises. Your keen observational skills will be required at all times.

Ages and Stages

Ages 6–9

Many primary children already have entered the thinking world that child developmentalists define as the "concrete operational stage"; they have moved from the preoperational stage into the realm of concrete operations. In this stage children can change, perceive, or develop concrete operations into something different, and from a concrete perspective they can understand simple abstract ideas. Children at this stage are beginning to

classify and order objects

focus on more than one object at once

coordinate relationships

decenter (look at all aspects of a problem rather than concentrating on just one aspect)

take different views of others' spaces

discuss their ideas

exchange ideas and thoughts with others

reposition material objects

perceive spatial relationships

justify their own viewpoints and consider the views of others.

In childhood the cognitive process is essentially poetic.

Edith Cobb

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	become accurate observers (but they still need help in drawing conclusions from their observations) **recall past experiences and images** **notice and grasp simple abstract patterns (some children)** Just as the minds of primary children are changing and expanding rapidly, so are their emotions and bodies. Children at this stage may begin as withdrawn watchers, staying on the outside of activities while they observe and start to build self-images. They may still have an overwhelming attachment to mother while their self-assurance is growing. They are developing deep friendships and are easily hurt by rejection. They may be apt to tattle, complain, or feel persecuted. During middle childhood it is common for children to be concerned with fairness, especially as this concept pertains to them. These children are giving up their egocentric natures and becoming concerned with important sociocentric issues such as justice and fairness. Some may fantasize about being adopted or may threaten to run away if they feel they are being treated unfairly. Children at this age like to touch and feel things and are becoming discriminating observers. In their enthusiasm for all that is new and wonderful, they may tackle tasks that are far beyond their physical or mental capabilities and become tired or disappointed when they fail to complete tasks. They may be overly dramatic. They are also at a stage when their oral skills far exceed their ability to write and attend. Do not be fooled into expecting them to replicate their oral skills on paper. In the primary grades children need a challenging environment, but one that is stable, tranquil, and

familiar. Because children in this age group are in such a state of transition, the adults with whom they have daily contact need to be aware of the limitations of children's physical, emotional, and mental needs. Children's new awareness of others needs gentle fostering, as does their new refinement and discrimination of self. A wise educator will, therefore, help students set realistic self-expectations. Time for introspection and exercises in developing self-esteem are essential to all children, particularly at this stage. The strong sense of self that develops during this stage, be it good or bad, will often follow children into adulthood.

Additionally, many physical changes are taking place. Although the farsightedness of earlier years has diminished, children's eyes are still shaped differently from those of adults, and children may still have difficulty focusing. It is very important for teachers and parents to be aware of visual problems during this period. As children attend to learning tasks, watch for eye tiredness, jumping movements, and eye crossing. Notice how far away children hold materials to see them. Undetected visual problems can greatly affect children's performance, especially in early reading development.

Children at this age are also acquiring new proficiency with their fine motor skills, and their gross motor skills are becoming stronger and more refined. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to continue to develop these physical skills. Physical activity should involve large and fine muscle groups and should be punctuated with periods of rest and quiet. Children must know the limitations and expectations of their own physical skills so that they can self-direct accordingly.

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To recapture childhood's wonder is to secure a driving force for grown-up thoughts.

Charles Sherrington

Ages 9–12

As children in the middle childhood years proceed toward adolescence, they build upon the previous stage, and growth in certain areas accelerates. These children have moved away from strongly egocentric behavior and are becoming more logical in their thought processes. They are much more aware of themselves in relationship to others and the world around them and they begin to see themselves through the eyes of others. Additionally, children in the later part of middle childhood

- **can easily discern and construct patterns and are especially attuned to shifts in their social realm;**
- **have developed a sense of appropriate timing and can understand deadlines, due dates, and time-related concepts;**
- **have developed strong sets of personal preferences, individual likes and dislikes, and willingly voice these;**
- **worry about academic success or failure and are capable of accurate, sometimes even negative, self-criticism;**
- **have a strong sense of their own capabilities and are becoming strongly independent and self-reliant, sometimes biting off more than they can chew;**
- **weave in and out of rebellion against and acceptance of adult authority;**

have developed a sense of meaningful industry concerning the use of their time and the things they make and about activities in which they are involved;

start to worry and express concern over the types of people they will become;

start to gravitate toward the views and opinions of their peers and move away from the direct influence of adults; and

start to build the foundations for understanding and appreciating abstract concepts as they enter the cognitive realm of formal operations. In this stage they may be capable of understanding complex abstractions that are supported by concrete examples.

In the physical realm, children of this age do things with great speed and zest. They often explode; they seem to have some form of internal combustion—they run, jump, leap, climb, hop, skip, yell, and laugh. They are becoming stronger and faster, are very aware of their own physical development and strength, and like to exhibit these new skills.

Despite teachers' personal viewpoints on competition, humans seem to be competitive by nature. At this stage children are very aware of their own gifts, their assets and their faults, as well as others' gifts and shortcomings. They actively enjoy the praise and recognition of their peers, but they still need reassurance from adults. While being realistic about humans' natural tendency toward competition, teachers can choose to create learning environments that foster cooperation.

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Children in this age bracket are beginning to push the limitations placed on them, to exert their independence and a sense of control over their own destinies. In essence, they are beginning to take responsibility for their lives. During the early part of middle childhood, teachers may find children reluctant to try new experiences, but in the later period, children become more adventurous at all levels. Teachers need to be aware that at this stage children have an intrinsic need to develop a strong sense of self and some level of autonomy. There is a strong quest for independence, a need to self-define, and an active seeking of experiences that enhance and test self-concept and promote personal growth. The primary shift that takes place at this stage is the shift away from adult influence toward that of peers and self. However, this realization must be tempered with the knowledge that these children still need guidance and safe, protected environments, as well as praise and support from adults. Offering nurturing support, not smothering attention, during this period is the fine line teachers must walk as they deal with this age group.

Adults must also realize that this period is a time of vacillation and shifting. Children in the later part of middle childhood need a wide variety of opportunities that allow them to weave in and out of the security of childhood, while tantalizing them with the promise of adolescence and adulthood. Teachers and parents may find that dealing with this age child can be a roller coaster ride. It is a time of extremes—often frustrating in terms of children's leaning back toward childhood, but exhilarating as they reveal the promise of their adult potential and autonomy. Use love and understanding to appreciate these children's extremes.

Method

The activities and suggestions in this guide are meant to be enrichment experiences and lessons in exposure and exploration. After you have guided the initial experience, it is up to you, in a cooperative relationship with the children, to determine where the experiences will lead. This cooperative model is quite different from the old top-down model of education. Collaboration between teacher and pupils means joint ownership of the curriculum and instructional directions (at least sometimes). The classroom becomes "our" classroom.

Collaboration needs to start early in children's educational careers. Often you can evaluate classroom experiences with children to introduce joint efforts. Such evaluation will help the children become self-directed learners. You may also find that children will want to repeat the experiences, so be prepared to provide the time and materials for related, extended, or even repeated experiences.

The term *learning*, from the Latin *lira*, means "furrow" and implies the process of creating tracks, furrowing information in our brains, fixing it in our minds. Learning can take place by memorization, by instruction from another, by experience, by exploration or discovery, by practice, and by familiarity and coming to know. It is a process that humans are born doing, even from their first breath, and it is a process that is an imperative part of being human. The ancients knew that true education involved drawing out the knowledge already within the learner. Socrates, for example, used questioning techniques to lead his students to understanding and enlightenment. This method assumes that the learner can actively construct or formulate knowledge using the natural gifts of the mind. The Socratic method assumes that teachers serve as facilitators. Their job is to create active

I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning.

Carl R. Rogers

If there is anything we wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not better changed in ourselves.

Carl Jung

learning environments and to choose activities that are appropriate for the ages, stages, talents, and interests of their students. Using the exercises provided here, you can support learning by allowing children to explore, to practice, and to discover concepts.

Using the Activities

The activities I include are open-ended and stress awareness, introspection, examination, humor, exploration, and evaluation. The instructional objectives for each activity are written as expressive activities that may lead to expressive outcomes or as problem-solving objectives rather than as traditional behavioral objectives. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the concepts inherent in effectively executing problem-solving objectives and expressive activities that lead to expressive outcomes, I offer the following tutorial.

Behavioral objectives determine specified learning outcomes by delineating exact, limited responses to learning tasks. By reducing objectives to statements that include explicit verbs, teachers have observable criteria by which to judge whether or not learners have achieved specified learning tasks. And using verbs related to areas of cognitive, affective, or psychomotor instructional intent, teachers can create a wide variety of educational experiences. Elliot Eisner (1985) commented on the usefulness of behavioral objectives: "Standards are crisp, unambiguous, and precise" (116). Therefore, teachers know exactly whether students have achieved the specified learning tasks successfully. "Students will name all nine of the planets in our solar system" or "In an end-of-chapter test on reducing fractions, students will successfully reduce to lowest terms at least 8 out of the 10 fractions." Students either achieve these tasks or they don't.

Of course, not all learning is as cut and dried as this succinct format implies. Much of surviving, growing, and flourishing in life revolves around finding successful solutions to everyday problems. Those who venture into problem solving find that there are many paths that can lead to successful solutions, or many roads to the same destination. With problem-solving objectives there may be different correct answers, and certainly teachers should expect diversity in approaches to problems. Indeed, one of the very exciting aspects of dealing with the processes in art is that there are myriad paths budding artists can take in formulating acceptable responses and products.

Teachers who are concerned about grades may wish to narrow the variability of students' products or responses by narrowing the parameters of the problems—elements such as time, space, materials, paths, certain techniques, and so forth. Or you can set up a contractual grading system in which students have to meet certain criteria to get a particular grade. With the addition of carefully delineated solution criteria you can find fair ways to determine subjective grades—the term *objectively subjective* is not an oxymoron.

Following is an example of a problem-solving objective with parameters.

The HARRISON FORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL has received a grant of $50,000 dollars to construct a nature trail on school grounds. Students are encouraged to offer their designs, which will include the following items:

a. **a visual plan of the paths and other areas to be included**

b. **a detailed budget to include labor and materials**

c. **an area for play**

d. **areas needing landscaping**

Problem parameters:

a. **Budget must not be over $50,000.**

b. **The areas included in the trail must not interfere with any existing school structures or facilities.**

c. **The trail must be within school grounds.**

d. **Each visual plan must be presented on graph paper and be drawn to scale.**

e. **Students must include a list of safety factors they considered when designing the trail and any play areas.**

Methods of evaluating this problem are simple. The teacher must accept all student responses that meet the problem criteria and fit the established parameters. In order to be subjectively fair, the teacher must accept a wide variety of responses. This exercise will undoubtedly produce some results that are superior to others, both visually and in detail, but all answers that meet the established criteria and fall within the established parameters must be considered successful. Teachers are ethically bound not to differentiate grades beyond those established in the initial criteria or within the contractual agreements. These are the rules of successfully using problem-solving objectives.

In essence, problem-solving exercises are those that actively solicit individual responses in accordance with predetermined criteria. They are extremely useful to teachers and students because they frequently reflect direct relationships to problems that exist in the real world. Students can then transfer the skills they use in the classroom to other situations. Additionally, these types of exercises frequently involve combinations of skills, which may also be in various domains, as opposed to the isolated skills used within the extremely specific parameters established in behavioral objectives.

Expressive Activities

Another concept used in the formation of objectives in this guide is Elliot Eisner's (1985) "expressive activities," which lead to "expressive outcomes." Eisner defines expressive outcomes as "the consequences of curriculum activities that are intentionally planned to provide a fertile field for personal purposing and experience" (120). The outcomes become the instructional objectives, but unlike behavioral objectives or problem-solving objectives, these objectives appear after the activity has occurred rather than before.

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Elementary teachers are often very successful at constructing these forms of learning experiences. Those of you who take advantage of teachable moments already have the techniques required to be successful with expressive outcomes. What is more difficult for teachers is to be aware of and to annotate the objectives that have been accomplished during these types of learning events. However, teachers are accountable for learning experiences and for the time students spend in the classroom, and children have a right to know what they have accomplished. I offer an illustration.

In primary education sand trays are important instructional tools. They provide tactile experiences that reinforce and develop fine and gross muscle coordination, as well as enjoyable experiences for the children. A first-grade teacher has scheduled a period of time for students to practice writing their names in the sand tray. She is also a teacher who provides a rich experiential environment, so there are lots of other materials scattered throughout the room. During the sand tray session (the expressive activity), one of her more acute observers gets a magnifying glass and starts looking at the grains of sand in the tray. He is full of questions. Other children pick up on his activity and also get magnifying glasses to look at the sand. As the children sift through the sand they notice that the grains are different sizes and shapes and colors. The children's questions revolve around these attributes. At this point the teacher can shut down the children's discussion and go on to other planned events, redirect the children to the original task, or use the children's innate curiosity as a powerful tool to motivate and to teach other valuable lessons. The teacher who trusts the natural instincts of her students may use their curiosity to embellish an investigation into the formation of sand.

The scenario might continue something like this: The teacher uses students' questions to develop a list of things to find out. These questions lead to myriad activities—books and stories about sand, the sea, fish, the oceans, trips to the beach, even to the making of glass. Further investigations into the formation of sand could be literary investigations integrated with research and science. Essentially, the teacher, being an artist at what she does, orchestrates the instructional agenda around the thematic interests of her students. She uses students' innate interest to guide them through the maze of related instructional experiences. What is important is that when children enter an activity that stirs their interests and the teacher uses those interests to develop other educational experiences, such moments must be continued and eventually evaluated.

Let's examine the expressive outcomes that evolved from the initial sand tray experience (expressive activity). Initially, the children were doing what the teacher had requested—writing their names in the sand tray. Students exercised their skills of letter replication and recognition, they exercised their powers of discrimination, they memorized the spelling of their names, and they exercised both their small and large muscle groups. Additionally, student questions led to the expressive outcomes of finding out about how sand was formed; investigating how certain fish create sand; finding out about coral, different species of fish, the forces of tides, waves, and weather; and discovering what types of sand come from different regions of the world. Students also learned to use reference materials to find out how glass is made.

All of these outcomes came from the initial exploratory experience of tracing letter shapes in the sand tray. Without collectively discussing the outcomes realized, the students might merely go home, and when asked what they did in school, tell their

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parents that they played in the sand tray. As learners involved in the cooperative adventure of learning, students have a right to know what they have accomplished. Not only does this evaluation process add credibility to the teaching process, but it aids students in constructing and transferring learning objectives from one experience to another. Therefore, the practice of this skill aids students in becoming self-directed, life-long learners.

Teachers using expressive activities that may lead to expressive outcomes are duty bound to evaluate the processes involved in the experiences. They can do so informally through discussions or formally through checklists, portfolio samples, folder annotations, or journal entries. Of course, some activities will not lead anywhere—they are just experiences that provide exposure and explorations. Within a balanced curriculum, this is perfectly all right. Not every path we take in life leads to an immediate destination. Sometimes it is necessary to wander an inviting path for the sheer pleasure of the experience.

As you use the activities in this guide, look for opportunities to extend the activities in accordance with students' interests. Some activities may entice students into further investigations, and others may not go anywhere. You don't know until you try. Alter any of the suggestions in accordance with your professional needs and the learning needs of your students.

To help you choose activities that will be appropriate to your needs, I have noted which activities reflect the principles discussed in chapter 3. I have also noted the age levels for which each activity is appropriate. Please note that Piaget underestimated the capabilities of many younger children to grasp abstract concepts. With concrete support, examples, and appropriate chunking, many younger children are capable of understanding abstract concepts. Some

activities also include extension suggestions and, when appropriate, material lists and suggested resources. Because many of the activities reflect new educational ideas, I discuss these ideas throughout the activity section to help you decide whether the activity will be educationally useful within your practice.

As you use the exercises, you might keep in mind John A. Michael's (1983) tenets concerning learning:

1. All **LEARNING** is based upon one's perceptual/sensory intake: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, and moving. Students learn more from firsthand experiences.

2. **NEEDS AND INTERESTS** (based upon the life of the student) are the bases of learning experiences; classroom activities and materials must be meaningful; *students must be stimulated* and become enthusiastic.

3. **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT** are stimulated by both security and adventure; the learning task should not be viewed by students as too easy or too difficult.

4. **LEARNING** involves some confusion and uncertainty because thinking takes place when one does *not* know what to do next. Learning begins with a lack of understanding (a question, a doubt, an uncertainty), with the students eventually achieving understanding and learning something new.

Life is full of untapped sources of pleasure. Education should train us to discover and exploit them.

Norman Douglas

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	5. **LEARNING** is more meaningful when students are open to the new tasks, desire to learn, and have sufficient confidence in themselves to put forth energy and overcome obstacles. 6. **LEARNING** is more meaningful when students participate in determining objectives, in planning, and in evaluating. 7. **LEARNING** is more meaningful when students have self-understanding and direction leading to greater confidence. 8. **LEARNING** is increased when students are relieved of anxiety and pressure for competition; when failures are viewed constructively; when efforts are appreciated; when students are freed from distractions and personal problems; and when students are not restricted to the things the teacher already knows. 9. **LEARNING** involves some changes in behavior, hopefully positive. 10. **SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE** should be learned as aspects of art, art expression, and life and not as isolated experiences. 11. **LEARNING** is most likely to occur when a conclusion or art product is reached before motivation is exhausted. In addition, it is important to remember that the activities were created to be enjoyed. *Niente senza gioia*—nothing without joy. It makes a difference. (86)

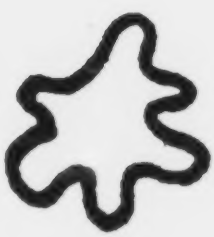
4

Imagery and Visualization

There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.

Graham Greene

To open doors to students' minds, teachers often enter the passages to students' hearts, inner beings, and senses first. Opening doors is a great responsibility, and while there are guides to help you, the ultimate decisions concerning intent and methodology rest on your expertise and commitment. There are no standardized tests or national norms relative to the psyche, the senses, or heart quotients. Teachers who consider aesthetic and emotional growth to be important must make a conscious choice to walk down less traveled trails. They make these decisions knowing that schools must also address and foster certain skills that cannot be measured, except, ultimately, in the arena of life. Growth must be viewed in the context of each student's life—how that student handles obstacles and triumphs, heartaches and disappointments, moments of elation, joy, and victory.



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Developing skills of the emotions and senses is education in its most elevated form—"drawing out"—and evokes a picture of teaching as both an art and a science. The activities in this guide are meant to provide moments in which students can be drawn out. The activities are intended to aid you in fostering and maintaining children's sensory gifts, perceptual abilities, and senses of wonder and joy.

To help you explain to others the use of these exercises and to help you choose those that will be most valuable to your students, I have used elements of holistic learning theory to develop the activities. I have coded each activity relative to these elements and to the multiple intelligences.

It is important to remember that each activity is written as an expressive or as a problem-solving activity. Art is a natural arena for creative problem solving since each student's solution will be unique. These activities are meant to be open-ended, and there may be myriad products that result from each activity. Teachers and students can decide together where they want each activity to lead. Also, as a form of closure and professional accountability, remember to discuss with students what they have accomplished. Analyze children's growth within the context of each activity and keep short annotations or checklists as lessons progress so you have a record of what has been accomplished.

Holistic Principles—A Reminder

Following is a list of the holistic principles I outlined earlier (Wilson 1990).

- **Recognize the uniqueness of each human being.** Encourage students to discover their true potential, to value their personal qualities, and to understand and value the qualities of others.

- **Recognize the hidden potential of the brain/mind and foster its connection with other body systems.**

- **Recognize varying ways of knowing as important and foster both linear and nonlinear methods of learning.** Holistic practices encourage the use of the imagination, creativity, intuition, centering activities, relaxation, meditation, guided imagery, dream exploration, physical encoding, and storytelling as possible ways of learning and knowing.

- **Recognize the importance of style preferences in learning.** Holistic education encourages self-discovery.

- **Acknowledge the learning environment as important.** Holistic practices stress the use of a stimulus-rich environment that is responsive to the individual's learning needs, styles, and preferences. The emphasis is on small group and individual instruction, rather than on whole group instruction. The environment supports a variety of activities that will appeal to both brain hemispheres. Cross-age grouping and contact with the community are supported.

Holistic Principles—A Reminder *(continued)*

- **View learning procedures and curriculum as a cooperative process between learner and teacher, between home and community, between child and world.** The teacher becomes the learner and the learner becomes the teacher. Emphasis is on cooperative relationships.

- **Use educational techniques that encourage students to engage the whole brain.** These techniques encourage divergence and convergence, finding and asking questions, finding and solving problems, tolerating ambiguity, and anticipating the future.

- **Encourage self-esteem and self-actualization, individual assessment, internal locus of control, and life-long learning.**

- **Emphasize learning as a process, a journey.** The processes are paramount to the content. Holistic designs stress learning how to learn.

- **Stress humans' compatibility with nature**—recognizing our relationship to the universe, teaching reverence for the patterns within self and the universe.

- **Encourage students to meld the random and sequential, the global and analytical, the rational and intuitive, emphasizing the search for internal and external patterns within the context of the whole.** (Wilson 1990)

The Importance of Imagery

Enhancing Vision

Everyone must learn to deal with stress and anxiety. We live in a fast-paced time, one that is full of dramatic change and that demands high energy from participants. Traditional structures and patterns are evolving into new forms.

Periods of accelerated growth can be both exciting and wrought with anxiety. One of the lifetime skills that we can teach children is how to deal appropriately with stress, anxiety, and the accelerated pace of living. Relaxation techniques and guided imagery are very useful tools not only for relieving stress and anxiety, but also for stimulating the imagination and tapping into creative powers.

Creative imaging is the ability to see pictures in the mind—to think in pictures. Imagery can go beyond visualizing; some people can actually hear and almost feel their mental images. It can be a total sensory experience. This skill is sorely neglected in most schools.

Related to imagery is the important activity of dreaming. Sleep experimentation shows that when humans are denied the ability to enter and experience REM (rapid eye movement) sleep stages (the times of dreaming), they start to hallucinate. As a species, we actively crave dreams and fantasy as part of our experience.

Piaget (1952, 1962, 1969) recognized the importance of fantasy in the process of intellectual development. His research shows that young children believe that their dreams are real and visible, but at the age of about seven, children understand that dreams are unreal and invisible to others. Research also shows a strong correlation between visual imagery

Anxiety is always the enemy of intelligence. The minute anxiety arises, intelligence closes to a search for anything that will relieve the anxiety.

Joseph Chilton Pearce

The whole creation is essentially subjective, and the dream is the theater where dreamer is at once scene, actor, prompter, stage manager, author, audience, and critic.

Carl Jung

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	and intellectual development. Initially, in her conception of education through discovery, Marie Montessori (1984) denied that fantasy was important to the early development of young children. But she later acknowledged its importance and the fact that children have a strong affinity for escaping to worlds of unreality. Creative imagery allows students to create fantasies that are often conducive to learning as well as helpful in reducing stress and anxiety. In solving problems, many people are able to visualize solutions. This ability can be fostered and enhanced. Giving children extended opportunities to use their powers of visualization also aids in maintaining their natural abilities of photographic memory and perception. These talents need to be preserved or they will be lost as children acquire proficiency in symbolic decoding. Children, therefore, need many opportunities to exercise their imagination through guided imagery, "let's pretend" games, storytelling, fantasy, creative play, discussions of dreams, simulations that draw on the imagination, and centering activities that help students relax. Such activities allow students to exercise visual memory and visual creativity. Undoubtedly, many of you are familiar with the procedures and the many uses for guided imagery and visualization. However, if you are unfamiliar with imagery experiences, use one of the excellent references listed at the end of this discussion to learn more about them. Visualization exercises do not necessarily have to take place during quiet times. You can create experiences in which children must work together as a team or move or react to their own mental images or to music. However, guided or creative imagery is an art. Like any other art form it takes practice, patience, and time to develop. Guided imagery should never be uncomfortable, hurried, or mandatory.

Images are highly personal, and we must listen to children's dreams, fantasies, and images with patience and understanding. Exercising imaginative powers is serious business and a skill that will last a lifetime. Classroom exercises should therefore be pleasant and nonthreatening.

The process of physically encoding material is also a very powerful mechanism for teaching and for learning. Encoding material can help create new neural pathways that enable students to remember material better. Physical movement and encoding are often companion exercises that enhance imagery experiences.

The exercises and activities in this section require space—space to lie down or to rest in peace and quiet, perhaps even in semidarkness, and space to move around without bumping into others. A carpeted space is best. Shades or blinds for darkening the room are useful, and you will need an outlet for a record, CD, or tape player. A blank wall or place to cast shadows is useful but not essential.

There are a few important rules and cautions to remember that will help optimize your students' imagery experiences:

1. **These exercises should never take place in complete darkness.** Not only might this cause injury in a room filled with exuberant children, but even in the later part of middle childhood, some children are afraid of the dark.

2. **Imagery experiences must never be forced on a child.** There may be very valid reasons why going into their imaginations is frightening for some children—reasons of which you may be unaware. Respect children's refusals or expressions of discomfort as valid reasons to be excused.

NOTES

Artists are really much nearer to the truth than many of the scientists.

R. Buckminster Fuller

3. **Make these experiences safe.** You might encourage children (and adults) who are reluctant to enter imagery experiences to take along someone or something that instills comfort—a friend, companion, pet, favorite toy, or object that provides a feeling of security.

4. **Excuse from these exercises children who are disruptive.** Those who hit or punch or pinch and those who are noisy or silly can easily turn imagery experiences into something farcical or bizarre.

5. **Guided imagery must never be rushed.** Racing through the experience does not give the imagination enough time to trigger the appropriate responses and thus wastes time.

6. **Always bring participants back to the present.** This process, called "decentering," is very important both in role-playing exercises and in guided imagery.

7. **Never go against parents' wishes!** Some teachers must deal with parents who view guided imagery as something evil or as brainwashing. It goes against some parents' religious beliefs. Some view it as meditation and think that children are being indoctrinated into cults or Eastern religions. No matter how noble your intent in using imagery, you must respect the wishes of your students' parents. It is professional suicide to do otherwise! (See my further comments on this below.)

8. **Know what you are doing;** read about the typical procedures and practice them until you master them.

9. **Remember you are using a powerful tool.** Be very mindful of the types of experiences you are asking students to experience. Choose material carefully—it should be appropriate for the ages and experience levels of your students.

10. **Enter imagery exercises with deep breathing and relaxation exercises to dispel anxiety and help students make the most of the experience.** Relaxation and deep breathing also can be used separately from imagery exercises to help reduce stress and tension levels and to aid in concentration and relief of anxiety.

Regarding point number 7 above: Guided imagery is not the same as meditation. The practice of meditation can greatly reduce stress and is often used as a tool for relaxation and for enhancing one's focus, but in its historic context, meditation does have religious roots and connotations. One aspect of meditation in a religious context is that it can be a conscious effort to get in touch with the elements of the unconscious that are in touch with the divine. In some forms of meditation the individual uses intense concentration and focus to release control to higher unconscious powers.

Guided imagery uses techniques that encourage individuals to relax and imagine things at a visual or sensory level. The major difference is that within the imagery exercise, the imaginer *always maintains control of the image.* The primary purpose of imagery is that it is a tool for stirring the imaginative parts of

NOTES

Again and again, step by step, intuition opens the doors that lead to man's designing.

R. Buckminster Fuller

the brain and for tapping into the gifts of the right hemisphere of the brain. The images of the right hemisphere act as a conduit and as a foundation for thoughts of the left hemisphere. Imagery is a powerful *aid for extending and maintaining one's natural creative powers.* If you wish to dispel parents' fears about what you are doing and why you are doing it, invite them in for a discussion and a session on guided imagery before you use it with students. Explain that it is a tool for enhancing students' performance and for teaching stress reduction. You can also point out that most successful sports programs are using this or similar techniques to enhance performance.

Sources for Guided Imagery

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Sample Exercise

If you are unfamiliar with guided imagery, the following is a sample of a guided imagery experience you might use with children. This dialogue also contains notes on appropriate breathing techniques. Please remember, while this is a book that recommends guided imagery and relaxation in the classroom, it is not a how-to manual. It is imperative that teachers have proper training in this area; please refer to one of the recommended guides or seek training from a knowledgeable colleague or expert. Also, all experiences do not have to be guided by the teacher—music is an excellent guide in and of itself. Find soothing or interesting music and use that as the guide, allowing children to use their own sense of fantasy to construct images. (Remember to stay away from material that could frighten children.)

BREATHING

Breathing is an essential part of life and an important part of the imaginative exercise. The first part of that statement may sound banal, but many of us are shallow breathers, taking in minimal amounts of air regardless of the task we are performing. We assume that we know how to breathe appropriately for each task because breathing is an automatic function—

A human being is a part of the whole . . . the universe. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

Albert Einstein

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Children need to become aware of different types of breathing before poor breathing patterns become deeply rooted. Children need to know that there are types of breathing that they can do to help them do things better, that they can do to tap into different types of energy. They also need to know that, with conscious effort, they can control this aspect of their lives.

To reduce stress we should breathe from the diaphragm, slowly inhaling through the nose and exhaling through a slightly open mouth, each time deliberately exhaling a little more air than we take in. We should do this cycle eight times to reduce stress, and for deeper relaxation, we should do it sixteen times.

When you teach children how to do this, have them sit cross-legged in a chair or on the floor, with their hands resting on their knees or in their laps. Or have them sit at their desks with their heads down. They can also lie down with their heads slightly elevated on their hands or on something rolled up like a pillow; a tightly rolled towel placed between the back of the head and the neck works well and is easy to store. Ideally, students' eyes should be closed or half closed during these exercises. Suggest that they become like rag dolls as they breathe—limp, releasing and sending the tension out of their bodies. With practice, students can even learn to do this exercise with their eyes open and standing to calm jittery moments of desperation.

Have children try the breathing exercise before a test to clear their minds, before doing something that makes them nervous, or when you would like them to calm down or change gears to move from an active or noisy activity to a quiet activity. Have students practice breathing exercises at home or in school before you start doing imagery exercises. Also have them explore their favorite position before you start the imagery exercises. Remember to review the

NOTES

procedures so students know what is expected of them before you begin imagery exercises.

SAMPLE IMAGERY EXERCISE

You may wish to try this with soft music. Remember to pace the exercise slowly, giving students' minds time to form the images. Have students get into a comfortable position. Start students with eight-count breathing exercises. For each pause in this exercise, stop for about five to ten seconds, depending on the age and maturity of your students. Remember to observe students' reactions to help you with your pacing.

The Field

After monitoring four or five relaxation breaths, begin.

I would like you to think about a lush, green field full of beautiful wild flowers. (Pause.) Continue your relaxation breathing as you see the field and the beautiful flowers in your minds. (Pause.) As you continue to breathe deeply, inhale the scent of the field—the new grass . . . the scent of the flowers . . . the fresh air that surrounds you. . . . The sun is shining and there is a soft, gentle, sweet breeze. (Pause.) See the bright green of the grass. (Pause.) See the beautiful soft colors of the flowers. (Pause.) You are in the field with some of your friends, who run slowly through the field. (Pause.) You are happy and are laughing. (Pause.) You and your friends are jumping; some of you are hopping and leaping. (Pause.) Some of you

are twirling around slowly. (Pause.) You are happy and are enjoying the warm beautiful day outside. (Pause.) As you play you come to a big tree in the middle of the field. It is a tall, old tree and its leaves are high above your heads. (Pause.) Touch the bark of the tree. (Pause.) See the lush dark green of its leaves against the sky. (Pause.) Hear the whispers of the leaves as they talk to the breeze. (Pause.) You and your friends lie down under its strong branches for a rest. You look up at the branches of the tree with your eyes half closed. The sun makes the shimmering leaves look like green jewels. (Pause.) You close your eyes and can hear the soft whispers of the leaves as they rustle in the gentle breeze. (Pause.) You smell the sweetness of the grass and the flowers. (Pause.) You are feeling warm, relaxed, and sleepy. (Pause.) You are very quiet as you listen to the songs and whispers of the field. (Pause) You are very relaxed and happy and peaceful as you take in the smells and sounds of the field. (Pause.) In the distance you hear a bird chirping. It's sound is like soft music. (Pause.) You notice that the bird's voice sounds as though it is calling your name. You hear the bird calling your name. (Pause.) The voice reminds you that you must go home now. (Pause.) You see yourself and your friends getting up. (Short pause.) You gently shake yourself awake. (Pause.) You and your friends get up and stretch toward the sky. (Pause.) You walk out of the field. As I count to ten, see yourself and your friends

NOTES

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	walking out of the beautiful field. 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . . 9 . . . 10. You are happy, refreshed, relaxed, and wide awake. Open your eyes. (Pause.) Roll your head gently around. (Pause.) You are back in school (home). (Short pause.) Welcome back! Children may wish to get up slowly and shake themselves a little. Allow them time to come back to reality. If the lights have been dimmed, turn them up slowly. (I keep a lamp with a 25- or 15-watt bulb lit in the classroom and leave that on as I do these exercises. When I have finished I turn on the overhead lights one by one.) Also remember to allow students time to decenter, to discuss what they saw, heard, and did. It is also important for them to discuss their feelings about this guided experience. Decentering can take place as a whole class or in small groups. Such imagery experiences may be used as catalysts for creative writing or for art or problem solving activities. But please remember that it is always important to allow students to decenter in some way! The works on guided imagery I recommend have many similar exercises. Once you get the hang of the technique you can make up your own, or some of your imaginative students may wish to try their hands at composing similar exercises. Following are additional considerations for the activities in this guide: Many of the exercises in this guide include art components. These exercises should be conducted in areas where there is space to examine, feel, and spread out, and water to clean up. You should require children to be responsible for the maintenance of their environment and to clean up after themselves. There should also be ample space for displays of children's artwork. These displays

should be constructed wholly or partially by the children. Each work of art or creative expression should be labeled with the creator's name. Groups or individuals can take turns creating displays. These displays and the works in them should be changed frequently and discussed by the class.

Maintaining the Sight

Please remember that in addition to the other objectives that drive the activities in this book, there are also many elements that were created to help maintain children's visual and sensory abilities, as well as to enhance children's senses of aesthetic wonder. I hope that these elements will help children see not just with their eyes, but also with their minds, hearts, and bodies. With the help of both internal and external visual activities, as children in middle childhood get older, they should become astute discriminating observers. During this period, schools can aid children in developing or maintaining spatial intelligence and visual discrimination by stressing skills the children can use in their lives. Given time and incentives, children at this age are capable of noticing the discreet differences in their surroundings and visual media. They can also construct new insights and perceptions through their varied senses of seeing.

Educators can use these budding skills to heighten awareness of surroundings and environments. Educators can also use students' natural inquisitiveness to build an appreciation for notable works of art and to tap into children's vast abilities for creative expression. To foster perception and discrimination skills, teachers can devise experiences that expose students to their environment and surroundings and that ask those students to look for

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.

But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relationship between what we see and what we know is never settled.

John Berger

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	detail, lines, shapes, textures, and colors. Teachers can then create activities in which students are allowed to use this newfound awareness in original art forms or as part of creative expression activities. Magnifying glasses, lenses, even microscopes, are essential for these experiences. And of course, time—lots of time for children to look and feel and touch and examine and to verbalize and discuss their observations.

PART THREE

On the Care and Maintenance of Gifts: Activities

Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist when he grows up.

Pablo Picasso

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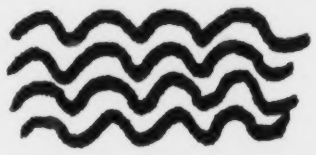
Knowing the Self



EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY BLOCK 1
Seeing Journal

RATIONALE

Journal writing is becoming a popular way of dealing with many issues. It is also experiencing a revival as a form for developing literacy, as a from of self-expression, as an analog of personal impressions, and as a catalyst for self-analysis or improvement. Like a written journal, a seeing journal allows the creator a means to examine thoughts, feelings, desires, and dreams in retrospect.

AGE LEVELS

all

HOLISTIC PRINCIPLES

1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11

INTELLIGENCES USED

spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal

MATERIALS

a purchased or made notebook or scrapbook
scissors
paste or tape
paper
magazines, newspapers, discarded books, greeting cards, wrapping paper, color swatches, or photocopied material

Seeing Journal

This activity is meant to be ongoing. Children will keep a collection of visual impressions and images. They should collect items that have personal meaning. Their log may contain visual impressions, sensory impressions, or anything that tickles the fancy or tantalizes the imagination of the saver—photographs, advertisements, cartoons, personal sketches or works of art, samples of work from the activities in this book, passages of poetry or prose that create strong visual impressions, newspaper clippings, greeting cards, wrapping paper, swatches of material or color samples, and so forth.

The collection can grow with students. It can provide a reference point for successive stages of development or grades—for annotating the growth of students' perceptions about their immediate or world environments. Students can also be encouraged to catalog or categorize their collections. Students should be encouraged to share their collections with the whole class, with small groups, or with classroom friends. This sharing allows students to enter the visual and perceptual reality of others. You may use this activity alone or combined with activities within subject areas or skill development units, for a whole class, small groups, or individual students. It is important to remember that time must be allotted for students to display their favorite collected elements and to discuss why elements of their collections have personal meaning.

Also encourage students to sit quietly with their projects several times a week and to try to re-create these events, these pictures, in their minds. This re-creation will help students maintain their natural abilities to recall visually. In essence they are continuing their seeing logs in their minds' eyes.

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY BLOCK 2
Collections of the Mind—
New Ways of Seeing

RATIONALE

We are surrounded by colors, lines, shapes, textures, details, similarities, and differences. The following activities are meant to heighten students' awareness of the rich variety and detail that envelops them. In these activities students are asked to keep in their scrapbooks, journals, or seeing logs a collection of varied visual experiences or their reactions to visual and sensory experiences. Some students may wish to create a separate collection or portfolio for the elements in the following activities. Later, they can transfer their favorite elements to their seeing journal.

AGE LEVELS

all (see each exercise for notations)

HOLISTIC PRINCIPLES

1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10

INTELLIGENCES USED

spatial, verbal-linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal

MATERIALS

bought or made notebook
scissors
paste or tape
crayons
pencils (colored and plain)
pastels or charcoal
various types of paper (thinner papers work best in capturing details and textures)

Rubbings and Embossings: Inside Out or Outside In

Textures trip

Common items and structures have detail and texture—a grate, a brick, the grill on a radiator, carpet, the weave of a basket, or common household objects. Students are asked to take a texture trip and collect rubbings from their surroundings. The side of a crayon or a piece of charcoal works very well in capturing the textures and shapes of our surroundings. Make a game out of students' collections; have them display their mystery rubbings from common objects and see if other children can guess the source. Have students classify the rubbings according to their sizes, shapes, patterns, textures, or origins. They can create a collage from their collected textures. Students also can reproduce the patterns and textures in their own drawings or original creations.

Embossing

You might also have students emboss designs from rubbing patterns, creating three dimensional creations or designs. A sensory experience can be seeing with the fingers as well as with the eyes. Braille is a form of embossing.

For this type of activity students will need heavier paper that holds its shape. Drawing patterns or rubbing patterns on the back side of the paper, they can then use an object to push (to emboss) the designs up to the other side. Utensils for doing this depend on the thickness of the paper and the desired effect. Experiment with varied utensils—the head of a horseshoe nail or pin, a flat screwdriver, a chopstick, or other eating or kitchen tools. Paper can be pushed up gently or pierced. If students desire color, the front side of the paper can be colored to resemble the planned design and then embossed. Students also can color the front of a paper haphazardly, then emboss from the back side to provide additional dimension, texture, and interest. Or they can gently iron with a steam iron over raised textures to impress textures into paper. If students desire to emboss only, they must be careful not to tear the paper.

Students should use caution in doing this exercise. You should supervise the piercing and ironing. Have students practice the embossing variation before they attack a final project so that they don't get frustrated and can find utensils that create the desired effects without tearing the paper. Students may want to create personalized stationery or pictures for people who have sight impairments.

Rubbings from the Past

Older students may find rubbings taken from tombstones or monuments especially interesting. If you plan on visiting a cemetery, please be sure to acquire permission from the owners or officials, and be sure your students respect and don't deface the monuments or tombstones.

The rubbings from the tombstones of European medieval knights and ladies are popular reproductions for wall decorations. These rubbings provide excellent examples of what tomb monuments used to look like. European travelers often bring these back from their trips, having either bought small reproductions or have done full size rubbings themselves. If you have access to pictures of these tomb rubbings or the full size rubbings, you may show them to older students who may wish to find out more about the lives and times of this historic period. Also, many older gravestones in this country have poetic epitaphs, quaint or amusing sayings, or brief family or personal histories that your students may find interesting.

If you go on a quest in a local historic graveyard, the rubbings can provide a wealth of material that might act as a catalyst for myriad related activities. Students can investigate personal, family, or community histories. A related exercise might be to have students write stories about the people they discover, or to have them investigate the backgrounds or lives of historic persons or families. They can create a collection of sayings or interesting epitaphs. The class can bind the collections as a history of the locale. Or you may have students think about what they would like to accomplish in their lives and then write their own epitaphs or design their own monuments.

Seeing in Different Ways

Reversing Perspectives

When you were a child did you ever lie on the floor and pretend that the floor was the ceiling or the ceiling the floor? Frequently humans allow their visual perceptions to become limited by what is immediately in view. This activity allows students to develop or maintain a perspective that is visually different from our typical adult perspective. Children need to learn to look up, down, and around, and to be able to experience what it is like to have a different perspective.

How many teachers take advantage of unused blank spaces by posting pictures or eye-catching displays? Frequently, we forget about that which is out of immediate visual range, and yet these spaces are important in our environment. The object of this exercise is to help students develop an awareness of spaces outside their normal range of vision and to help them develop an awareness of different visual perspectives.

My interest in acute perceptual awareness was fostered by an intense discussion with students about the immobility of children with polio, who were fitted with iron lungs in the 1950s. Concerned with students' understanding of the 1950s as well as the development of empathic attitudes, I asked my students to simulate the horizontal world of the children they were reading about. As was done with the children in the stories, I enhanced the view of my students' horizontal plane with mirrors, but the perceptual limitations of such an existence became extremely evident and was very frustrating to my students. This exercise caused my students and me to view the empty spaces in our classroom environment very differently, and we began decorating them. Since I was a new parent, I used this experience to help me understand the visual views of children in various stages of development, as well. In preparing the environments of my own children for visual stimulation and safety, I made sure to take the perspective of my children into account. If they were looking up at the ceiling, I decorated the ceiling. If they were only knee high, then I decorated surfaces at that height. By looking at rooms from my children's perspectives, I was better able to pinpoint areas of danger,

as well. Students can develop similar perceptions by maintaining their ability to see things differently.

Initiate this activity by having students lie on the floor and look up at the ceiling. Ask them to project in their minds' eyes what it would be like to reverse the ceiling and the floor. What would it be like to be immobile and not be able to see anything but what they can see as they look up at the ceiling? You may want to give students small hand mirrors so they can see around themselves. You can also enhance this exercise by having students assume different postures—lying face down on a table or on a group of chairs, crawling around, and so on.

One of my former graduate students, Kathleen Larson, gave me another idea for using mirrors. The class was discussing viewing the world from the perspective of a child when Kathleen told them that she used to place a mirror under her nose and walk around the house pretending she was walking on the ceiling.

As always, make sure that you do this activity in a safe environment. Have students work in pairs, with one holding the mirror and walking and the other making sure that the way is clear so the student doesn't fall. Students can hold at about nose level a piece of reflective mylar or a mirror with a plastic edge. They walk around the classroom or the building. Afterward have students discuss their feelings and impressions and the physical sensations involved in this adventure.

Drawing Upside Down

This activity tricks the left hemisphere and is for students in grades three and above. In *Drawing on the Artist Within* (1986), Betty Edwards teaches adults and children techniques that aid them in tricking the left neocortex of the brain (the supposed rational, linear side) into relinquishing control to the right neocortex (the supposed visual, spatial, relational side). Edwards postulates that the left hemisphere usually dominates cognitive thought processes, especially in relation to verbal expression and interpretation. The left side is concerned with making sense and order of objects, and with naming or cataloging items in the world. Perceptual thought is a very different form of thought, one that is perceived to be centered in the right hemisphere.

Edwards recommends a technique that has been used by many teachers of art: drawing something that has been turned upside down. It is Edwards's contention that the upside-down-drawing technique deters the left hemisphere from dominating the artistic process, thus allowing the right hemisphere to see, interpret, and reproduce the essence of the image. Students concentrate only on reproducing or capturing the lines or the spaces of an object or picture.

I have used this technique for more than twenty years, getting all ages of students to draw, despite their frequent protests that they were not artists. It works exceptionally well for initiating students into the world of pure visual form, thus helping them sharpen and maintain gifts of right-brain thinking.

If you wish to try this exercise with your students, choose a picture that is complex enough to have a number of interrelated lines and spaces, but simple enough not to cause frustration. Be sure to choose pictures that students will not recognize easily (older students might recognize Stewart's *George Washington* or da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*). If students can recognize the picture they may automatically engage the left brain, trying to analyze and catalogue the picture rather than concentrating on reproducing just the lines and spaces. Large art reproductions work nicely, as do pictures that can be projected on an overhead so that the whole class or large groups can work on this exercise. In addition to the Edwards book, another good resource for students is *Masterpieces: A Coloring Book* by Mary Martin (1981). Martin's book converts many well-known masterpiece paintings to black and white drawings that work very well for this activity.

Resources that support these activities or that may help students create other activities using the principles discussed in this portion include

Baum, A., and J. Baum. 1989. *OPT: An Illusion Tale.* New York: Puffin Books.

Escher, M. C. 1989. *Escher on Escher: Exploring the Infinite.* Bergenfield, N.J.: Abrams Art Books.

———. 1992. *The Pop-up Book of M. C. Escher.* Rohnert Park, Calif.: Pomegranate Art Books.

Escher, M. C., and J. C. Locher. 1974. *World of M. C. Escher.*

Bergenfield, N.J.: Abrams Art Books.
Jonas, A. 1983. *Round Trip.* New York: Mulberry Books.

Drawing on the Ceiling

This activity is for students age 8 and older. Renaissance painters frequently painted pictures on the ceilings of homes, churches, and public buildings. The technique is called *fresco.* Painters would paint on wet plaster, and the paint and plaster would dry together, creating a resilient finish. Artists would have to work quickly before the plaster dried, so this process required a great deal of physical effort and planning. Michelangelo is probably the best known fresco painter, and his fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome is world famous.

Students can get a taste for the difficulty of what fresco painters had to go through by painting on the ceiling. In this activity, the undersides of tables or desks become ceilings. Tape large sheets of butcher paper or brown paper under students' desks and have them mimic painting frescos on the ceiling. They can rough in designs with charcoal or chalk and then paint the designs. Or they can sketch what they are going to paint, then enlarge their sketch and paint it. Water colors are an excellent, realistic medium for this exercise because they dry quickly, much like drying plaster.

You can add another variable to the simulation. Early painters had to work with limited light and on irregular surfaces—all ceilings were not flat. Although you will not want students to work by candlelight as did these early painters, you can allow students to enhance low light levels by using flashlights or small lamps.

This exercise will also require students to solve problems and develop a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the talents and creative genius of artists in the past. Students will become uncomfortable under the tables and will have to decide how to get more comfortable. They may decide to paint while lying on their backs with pillows or towels under their heads. These awkward positions may help them understand the sheer physical effort that was required for projects such as Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel.

I like to conduct two discussions, one before and one after the exercise. I note the changes in students' attitudes.

There are some excellent children's resources about great artists as well as readily examples of the prolific work of Michelangelo.

Janson, H. W., and A. F. Janson. 1992. *History of Art for Young People.* Bergenfield, N.J.: Abrams.

Raboff, E. 1988. *Buonarroti Michelangelo.* Art for Children Series. New York: Harper Collins.

Venezia, M. 1991. *Michelangelo.* Getting to Know the World's Great Artists series. Chicago: Children's.

Drawing on the Ideas of Others

This activity falls under the realm of interpersonal intelligence, in which good communication skills play a large part. But communication can be much more than words, talking, and listening; there are other ways of communicating—looks, gestures, postures, eye contact, touch. Some rare individuals transcend normal communication skills by becoming highly intuitive about the thoughts and needs of others. Intuition is a natural process that is inherited by some and can be developed by others. Getting to know what other people are thinking and how they will react to certain situations is a large part of interpersonal intelligence. The following exercises are meant to strengthen nonverbal communication by tapping into the visual space and ideas of others and by finishing what others have started.

There are two variations of this exercise; one is a structured approach, and the other is unstructured. Both variations of this activity can be used as a warm-up exercise for other activities that require interpersonal communication skills. Assess your students, then choose the component that best suits them. If you do not know your students well, I suggest that you begin with the structured approach.

Begin by taping large pieces of brown or white butcher paper to the surfaces of desks or tables so that they don't shift while students are working. Have students select several crayons or markers in their favorite colors.

Have students start by making a doodle on the paper. Doodles can be anything: nonsense scribbles, varied line formations, line fragments,

the beginnings of a drawing. Allow students thirty seconds to one minute to doodle.

If your students are using the structured format, give them each a number from one to five. Ask them to place that number in the top, right corner of their initial doodle. At two-to-five-minute intervals, students will move to the next picture that bears the number they have been assigned. They continue to work on the picture in front of them. Continue until the students are at their original doodles.

In the unstructured approach, students move to a picture that has a doodle that interests or intrigues them. In this approach it is possible that more than one student will work on a picture at a time, but no more than two students can peaceably work on the same picture at a time. Shifts should last three to five minutes. Students should rotate at least three to five times without returning to a picture to which they have already contributed. At the end of the exercise, all students should have the opportunity to view the creations. Students should be encouraged to discuss the process and the works of other students.

An excellent exercise in comparison is to have students do the exercise both ways on separate occasions, and then to discuss their different reactions to the organization of the lesson. Some students appreciate structure, others appreciate freedom; both views are a reflection of individuals. Students need to share these thoughts.

The object of the discussion that follows the activity is to allow students to discuss their feelings about the structure and organization. Within either format, the person who usually has the opportunity to take the drawing from something nonsensical to something well-defined is the second person. That person determines what the doodle will become. Subsequent drawers are piggy-backing on the other artist's conceptualizations. In essence, this activity is similar to verbal brainstorming, especially in deferring judgement. Frequently, students will have to use their intuition and their creative imaginations to continue the communication started by others. The rules are simple in that each creator willingly relinquishes control of the visual idea to the next creator, thus creating a continuum of thoughts on paper.

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY BLOCK 3
Signs, Symbols, and Mirrors of the Mind

RATIONALE

Art is a natural pattern of the mind—past and present. Mona Brookes (1986) notes that "drawing, like speaking, is a natural human response" (xv). Howard Gardner (1980) considers children's drawing to be in a class of human miracles. One of the basic concepts portrayed in these works is that children are natural drawers. This predilection appears to be a universal tendency. Experts who study child development note that young children may take food and smear it around to make doodles, marks, or pictures. Adults may see such actions as a hassle, a defiant child actively creating a mess, one that some poor belabored adult will have to clean up. But we can also view these activities from a more creative perspective: perhaps children are exercising their small muscles, their tactile senses, and their imaginations.

Many patterns similar to those found in children's early drawings also appear, or have appeared, in the works of adults from around the world. Such patterns are often found in pictographs, cave drawings, in the designs of early alphabets, and in the embellishments and artwork of various peoples. The universality and similarities of such patterns can be seen in wide varieties of media—from simple designs etched in stone to artifacts, jewelry, ancient alphabet tablets, tattoos, and clothing designs.

In his work *Vision and Invention: An Introduction to Art Fundamentals,* Calvin Harlan (1986) includes a segment that discusses simple line drawings and children's drawings. The Harlan work discusses many sources that note the similarities in designs. One of the works Harlan cites is *Art and Science,* in which Dolf Rieser reports that when the brain is stimulated electrically the subjects see certain light patterns. These light patterns are called *phosphenes,* and examples of the symbols are shown on page 116. Harlan suggests that phosphenes can be found in many symbols in the drawings of young children and in the art of both modern and ancient peoples. The similarities are unmistakable. These types of drawings have also been combined to make

infinite varieties of pictures and patterns. In some instances they can even be seen as forming the rudiments for ancient alphabets or painted in caves or carved in stone as petroglyphs. Similar designs were chosen to represent a variety of sports activities during the 1994 Olympics. These popular figures were reminiscent of ancient drawings. The universality of these similar symbols, scribbles, doodles, and drawings is fascinating.

The following activities take advantage of the natural patterns early humans saw and those the mind's eye sees as phosphenes. Additionally, it tunes children into patterns that are universal.

AGE LEVELS

all (see individual components for notations)

HOLISTIC PRINCIPLES

1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11

INTELLIGENCES USED

all seven

MATERIALS

assorted paper
large roll of butcher paper or bulletin board paper
colored pencils
paint
markers
colored chalk
colored sand (can be made with food coloring)
or powdered tempera paints

See individual components for further suggestions.

123

Variations on a Theme

Reproduce the phosphenes on the page.

Movement Phosphenes

You or your students can construct large copies of the phosphenes to tape to the floor. (Older students may wish to try to reproduce the patterns without the larger floor patterns.) Allow students to reproduce the drawings in free movement exercises or through dance movements. Challenge students to create rhythmic walking exercises or dances to the patterns. You can have them do this singly, in pairs, or in small groups, with or without music or tapped out rhythms. When students complete their patterns or exercises they may wish to use ribbons, streamers, or scarfs to enhance their movements. Allow students to refine their movements, choreograph them, or perform them for an audience.

Symbolic Phosphenes

Talk about what each phosphene might mean and how the phosphenes can be used in an artistic sense. Use the phosphenes to develop patterns and codes or simple alphabets. Have children either re-create the symbols of the phosphenes or create their own similar patterns, keeping their designs simple.

Combinations of Phosphenes

Combine several of the phosphenes into varied patterns for reproduction in any medium: crayons, paint, markers, colored pencils, even computer graphics. Such combinations make especially nice prints on either cloth or paper. Older students can carve the patterns into potatoes to make stamps.

Deciphering Petroglyphs and Pictographs

Have students look at and decipher some of the patterns and symbols in pictographs, petroglyphs (rock carvings), baskets, and pottery. What might they mean? Are the symbols similar throughout different cultures? Have students offer their own translations of ancient messages. They could create a message and leave it in a time capsule for others to find later.

Painting Caves

This activity is for older students. Although it is not essential, you can use a creative visualization exercise to get students in the mood for this exercise.

Find pictures of petroglyphs or pictographs and have students concentrate on traveling back to the time of cave dwellers or Anasazi civilizations. Pan pipe or American Indian flute music by performers such as Coyote Oldman or R. Carlos Nakai would be appropriate for a mind trip back through time. Introduce students to the concepts of petroglyphs and cave drawings, then have them investigate what materials early humans used to decorate caves, textiles, and pottery. Put up large pieces of paper around the room or on the bulletin boards. Have students use the things they have learned and developed to become primitive graffiti artists. They can use earth pigments, natural dyes, or paint that is the same as colors used in ancient paintings to create scenes and leave messages for others. Be sure to have students use only their fingers, sticks, or elements found in nature when they paint. Students should try to imitate the artistic styles used in cave paintings by using the same visual elements that were used by the people they have studied.

Undoubtedly, students will have many questions as they simulate such artistic efforts. You can direct their curiosity by having them compare the petroglyphs of the U.S. Southwest to paintings in the caves of France and Spain. Pictures of cave paintings from Altamira in Spain and from Lascaux and Peche Merle in France are perhaps the most famous representations of this art form. You may wish to obtain copies of these from art history books or from history or anthropology books. Additionally, decorative art forms and artifacts from the Aboriginal cultures of New Zealand and Australia provide excellent examples of highly expressive, stylized patterns and decorations. Students can use all of these examples.

You may also suggest that students work in candlelight to simulate early humans' efforts, being very careful to do so safely. If you are wary of the dangers involved in doing this, perhaps the finished drawings could be viewed in candlelight or with flashlights in a darkened room to give the effect of being in a cave.

This type of activity can also serve as a catalyst for writing stories that revolve around the tales, adventures, and activities depicted in students' simulated cave drawings or in historic cave drawings. Give students opportunities to investigate stories about the people who discovered these ancient remnants. Additionally, students may wish to simulate the ancient art of storytelling and create stories or adventures to tell. One book that incorporates both aspects is *Dreamplace* by George Ella Lyon (1993). An additional resource is *If Rocks Could Talk* by Jane Bush (1993).

Making Mandalas

The term *mandala* has several connotations. The most generic definition of mandala is that it is a circular, graphic pattern divided into four separate sections. Sometimes the sections are divided into multiple projections of repeated or different images or patterns. In many societies the mandala has developed symbolic or religious significance. For some it represents the universe; others, especially Hindu, Buddhist, or some American Indian cultures, use the mandala's specialized patterns in religious ceremonies. In some parts of the world mandalas serve as a type of protective, personal talisman.

Students could investigate the mandala and its use in different cultures. Using different media, students can each develop their own mandala as a sign of protection or as a talisman. An interesting variation of this theme that has multi-cultural implications would be to have students create large mandalas outside, with colored chalk or sand, or to

have them create their own ceremony in which they use their mandalas.

A resource for further investigations into mandalas is *Mandala* by Joseph Arguelles (1985).

Learning
is finding out
what you already know.
Doing is demonstrating that
you know it.
Teaching is reminding others
that they know it just as well as you.

You are all learners,
doers, teachers.

You
teach best
what you most need to
learn.

Richard Bach

6
Using All the Senses

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY BLOCK 4
Seeing with All the Senses—Different Kinds of Seeing

RATIONALE

Children need to know that there are many ways of "seeing." These exercises are geared toward allowing students to see with their other senses and to imagine with their minds' eyes. Elements of the following exercises are also meant to encourage older children's moral reasoning. Teachers should look for ways to extend the exercises and provide time to discuss students' perceptions and thoughts.

AGE LEVELS

all

HOLISTIC PRINCIPLES

1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11

INTELLIGENCES USED

verbal-linguistic, logical, spatial, kinesthetic-tactile, interpersonal, intrapersonal

MATERIALS

None

No Peeking

You may have students relax and close their eyes so that they can visualize this story. There are different versions of this Asian tale, which is about the limitations of seeing only parts of the whole. The tale goes like this:

In a far off land, many years ago, there was a city called Gohr where all the inhabitants were blind. (In some versions of the story there are three blind monks). In the desert near the town of Gohr, a king from a nearby kingdom was camping with his great army. The king used a large elephant to attack and frighten his enemies. Three men from the town heard about the mysterious, mighty animal. Because they didn't know anything about elephants they decided to go and investigate. Now remember that these citizens of Gohr were blind and had no previous experiences with elephants. As they did with many things, the three blind men tried to "see" the elephant with their hands. As a result each man felt only a small portion of the animal. The other citizens of Gohr anxiously awaited the men's return to hear what an elephant was really like. The people asked about the animal's size, its shape, and its form.

One of the men had felt the elephant's ear; he reported, "Oh, an elephant is a big, rough thing, broad and wide. It is much like a rug."

His companion disagreed. "No," he said. "It is not like a rug!"

This man had felt the trunk and insisted that he had the real facts. "It is like a long, straight pipe, hollowed out and moving and destructive."

The third man spoke up. "No, no, no," he said. "You are both wrong." This man had felt the feet and legs of the mighty elephant. He insisted, "The animal is like a great pillar or a big tree that grows up to the sky."

Each member of the town came away with an entirely different idea of what the animal looked like—depending, of course, on whom he or she believed. But none of the citizens of Gohr had the right idea.

The No-Peeking Box

For this portion of the exercise encourage students to use their imaginations, their senses, and their intuitions.

Construct a large box (or several boxes) with a hole at one end large enough to insert an arm and a hole at the other end that can be opened or closed. If you have very curious students you may wish to attach a sleeve with an elastic cuff to the first hole of the box that allows students to reach inside without peeking.

Gather a collection of materials that have assorted textures, sizes, and shapes, being careful to ensure that they are free from sharp edges or splinters so that students won't cut themselves. You might also try including items that have certain distinct smells, as well, which will give students' olfactory senses a workout. Have students touch, hold, and smell the items to try to identify them. You might also have students collect items for each other and become one of the investigators yourself. Or you can extend the activity by placing pieces of one object into the box or in successive boxes, asking students to figure out the whole from the disassembled parts.

For students who are more advanced, you may have them try to draw the objects after touching them only. Or you may have them draw the whole object after touching only the parts.

Given enough time and practice with this exercise, children can become very adept at telling objects by touch. Some people become so adept at this that they can sense the energy around objects without touching them directly. Children should be able to make the transition from noticing things only with their eyes to becoming more multidimensional and tactile sensors.

In our society children are often admonished for touching things. For much of their young lives, children are directed away from tactile experiences—"look but do not touch." Many students need to be able to compartmentalize this aspect so that they know when it is appropriate to touch things and when it is not. Sensing is an aspect that must be encouraged continually so that students do not lose their innate sensory abilities and are able to "see" with more than one sense.

Additionally, older students can make the transition to placing the "no peeking box" in broader, social abstraction. It can become an exercise that can have strong allegorical meanings for understanding people and events that have aspects to which we are in essence blind until we sit down and examine them using reflective, multidimensional analysis—what we see, hear, perceive, observe, and intuit. Snap judgments based on limited sensory or intuitive input frequently cause us to reach premature, even erroneous, conclusions. Teachers using the "no peeking box" and the story about the three blind monks can help students make the transference from that concrete experience to the moral and social implications of examining people and interactive situations from limited perspectives or with limited information. Students may come to realize that viewing a situation or other people from one perspective limits understanding. This exercise can then be transferred into more thoughtful approaches and strategies for developing multidimensional perspectives.

Seeing through Words: The Power of Allegory

One of the most effective entries into the imagination is the spoken word. Words create images; they also represent concepts and lessons. One of the most ancient and powerful methods used to teach children the difference between right and wrong was the allegory, the fable, or the parable. In the past, these stories were used to help children make choices about their lives and the circumstances that surrounded the choices that they had to make.

Again, we are starting to teach moral and ethical lessons in schools. After decades of taboos about imposing morals and ethics on children, it has suddenly become fashionable to reverse that trend. The contact children are having with adults who are role models or with institutions that teach morals or ethical behavior has greatly decreased in a large portion of our society. Because of changing family and social structures, children's contact with numerous adults who used to teach those lessons has become greatly diminished. For many children the institution with which they have the most contact is school.

But the ultimate question is, "Whose morals and ethics are schools teaching?" This is a touchy question, perhaps one that can be handled best by actively offering lessons that are open-ended—allegories, fables, parables, and stories that represent the historic values that are regionally appropriate.

This strategy has three primary advantages. First, it allows children to carry the lessons back home for clarification and reflection. They can then place the values within the context of the values of immediate families, allowing parents to clarify moral lessons for their own children. It also allows children to explore historic and picturesque literature from a multitude of cultural and ethnic perspectives. Lastly, it protects the teacher from not allowing individuals to assume the sole responsibility for defining their own moral perspectives, especially when those perspectives may turn out to be different from those of the parents.

I developed the following story one evening to tell my eldest daughter at bedtime. I hoped to help her with a difficult decision concerning peer pressure. Subsequently, fellow teachers have used it to facilitate the following activities. It can be used in a number of ways.

1. You can use it simply as a story that conjures up strong mental and pictorial images. You can then have students discuss and interpret those images through original drawings or other related art projects.

2. You can use it as a catalyst to discuss environmental issues.

3. You can use it to teach moral lessons about the importance of choices, allowing students to make personal choices that may be unpopular with peers, or that go against popular beliefs.

The Stream

In the deep places of the earth there lived a spring. Long had it flowed from a hidden place where a rocky plain touched the base of a tall mountain. The waters of the spring were crystal clear and sweet and cool.

One day the ground shook and quaked and rose and fell. The earth parted, making a deep, long crack. The spring was now free to climb from its hiding place and to bubble up to the surface of the earth.

For the first time it felt the warmth of the sun upon its waters. It saw the shining stars and the pale of the moon. It felt the sweet caress of the warm wind. The spring was happy in its freedom.

The spring moved down the crevice in the earth and away from the mountain. As it moved, it was joined by melting snow and falling rain. And the spring became a gently flowing stream.

Still clear and cool, the mixing waters learned much from one another. The rain told of storms and hail and of the power of summer's dark clouds. The snow sang of the beauty of the mountains and of mists that kissed the very sky. The spring whispered of the mysteries of cradling rocks and of secret caves. Together, as a stream, the binding waters were happy and content.

As the stream flowed softly away from the mountain, the rain told of a great and mighty river beyond the plain. The stream dreamed of joining the river and traveling to the great sea. It longed to mix with the river's deep down, down bed the earth had made for it. The stream now flowed with a strong purpose, down, down, the bed the earth had made for it.

Deer and rabbits and quail came to drink from the stream. Lush grasses and beautiful wildflowers grew along its banks, delighting in its moisture. Children splashed and waded in its coolness. The stream was proud of the gifts it gave back to the earth.

One day the waters of the stream reached the edge of a forest. Until now it had been following the long groove in the earth and its travels had been easy. But there, at the very edge of the crack, stood a majestic oak. Tall and straight and ancient, the tree blocked the natural course of the stream.

For almost a century, the waters of the stream had fed this tree. The underground spring had touched its deepest roots. The rain had cleansed its summer leaves. The snow had blanketed its resting limbs. The waters of the stream knew that keeping to its natural path would wash away the soil from around the tree's roots. The great oak would slowly weaken, topple, and die. No longer would children climb its thick trunk. No longer would birds nest in its branches. No longer would weary animals be able to seek shelter in its shade. How could the stream kill that which it had helped to grow?

With great effort, the stream cut deep into the surface of the earth, creating a new path that ran safely to the left of the giant oak.

When it was a safe distance from the tree, the stream rejoined the crack in the earth. Down, down the plain it flowed, seeking the big river. The stream dreamed of the friends it would make in the river. It dreamed of lazy warm days, of gentle nights, and of soft, whispering winds.

Suddenly, the stream was awakened from its daydreams. A huge rock stood before its path. The violence of the earth's cracking had already crumbled part of the giant rock.

Atop the rock stood a lone boy playing king-of-the-mountain. The boy had decorated the smooth sides of the rock with beautiful drawings of dragons, knights, and castles. This rock was his place of places, his private world, his fortress.

The stream knew that the rock had become old and weak. It would soon wear away and fall if waters lapped at the crumbling parts. The stream also knew that if the rock were washed away, the dreams of the young boy would go with it.

Again, with great effort the stream cut deep into the surface of the plain. It formed a new path to the right of the aging rock. When it was a safe distance from the boy's fortress, it rejoined the crevice that formed its bed. For a long time the stream could still hear the voice of the happy child as he sang his songs of ancient heroes.

The rhythm of the stream became faster now. Its sweet, sparkling waters felt the invisible hands of the mighty river pulling it closer. The stream longed for its journey to be over. It longed to be part of the greater waters. It longed to share the adventures of the river.

The stream ran through a field of tall, whispering grasses. Plump bobwhites and soft, brown wrens came to drink from the stream and to splash in its soothing, cleansing waters.

The grasses faded into a clearing. There the crack in the earth faded and disappeared beneath a small mound of earth. Upon this mound stood a home. It was a lovely home, white and clean, with flowers planted all around and children playing in the yard.

The gentle stream was weary from its trek. To disappear beneath the hill and come out on the other side would have been very, very easy for the little stream. But the long journey had made the kind waters wise in the ways of the world. It knew when the spring rains came and snow from the mountains melted again, it would become swift and swell with new waters. The stream also knew that if it ran under the home, it would flood the basement and crumble the foundation.

With all the force it possessed, the stream split itself in two. One half trickled by the house on the left side and the other half trickled to the right side, creating a safe island. Now the divided waters could not harm the people in the house. The father would build small footbridges over the split stream. The children would splash and play in its shallow waters. They would make paper boats that could safely sail upon its waters, all the way to the great sea beyond.

Exhausted, the waters of the stream melded together on the far side of the mound. It was pleased with its efforts to save the home. It shimmered with kindness.

The stream now ran very fast. It still followed the line that the earth had made for it. The stream was tired but the excitement of the river called louder than ever. The river spoke in a deep roar of rushing waters.

The big river was so close that the small stream smelled its pungent waters. Strange, unfamiliar odors mingled with those of moist earth and wet wood. Even though the stream still could not see the river, it sensed something was wrong.

The stream's final path wound to the very edge of the riverbank. As it approached the end of its course, it paused, puzzled by what it saw. Before it stretched the river, that mighty body of water the stream had dreamed about and had longed to join.

The river was indeed wide and huge and impressive. A great storm had recently passed over its surface. Its waters were churning, violent and full of fury. Broken trees bobbed frantically, drowning in muddy foam. Bits and pieces from broken houses were flung atop crashing waves. The river was swollen with power and terrible in its might.

The gentle stream was deeply saddened by the destruction it saw before it. It knew its sweet, sparkling waters could never feed the violence of this uncaring river.

With tremendous effort, the stream once again left its bed and turned away from the pull of the dangerous river. The waters of the stream looked back at the plain it had left behind. The home, the rock, the tree, the mountain all seemed to smile at it. Knowing it had made the right decision, with a glad heart the stream continued on its own kind, considerate journey to the sea far away.

I frequently read stories aloud as quiet exercises in imagery to try to set a slower pace so that students can see the story in their minds' eyes. We are becoming such a visual society, grossly dependent on media that tell us what and how to see. To perpetuate internal visual ability through the powers of the imagination, students need to exercise those powers of imagination frequently. Additionally, in maintaining whole literacy, it is important to allow students to imagine stories without the interference of prefabricated pictures, allowing the words to paint individual, visual interpretations of spoken words.

There are literally thousands and thousands of books that contain fables, allegories, and parables appropriate for children. Here are a few of my favorites.

Bunting, E. 1984. *The Man Who Called Down the Owls.* New York: Macmillan.

Hastings, S. 1987. *Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady.* New York: Mulberry Books.

Pogrebin, L. C., ed. 1982. *Stories for Free Children.* New York: McGraw-Hill, A Ms. Book.

Van Allsburg, C. 1991. *The Wretched Stone.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Waechter, F. K. 1980. *Three Is Company.* Translated by Harry Allard. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc.

Yolen, J. 1974. *The Girl Who Cried Flowers and Other Stories.* New York: Schocken Books.

Any book containing Aesop's Fables.

Art refers to the conscious effort of human beings to arrange color, shapes, lines, sounds, movements, and sensory phenomena to express their ideas and feelings about themselves and their world.

Cohen and Gaines

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY BLOCK 5
The World of Colors—Inside and Out

RATIONALE

Younger children are developing their tastes for a variety of colors, and older children have already gone through a series of stages in which they developed likes and dislikes. Children should have some control over their world of color, some choice in the colors that surround them. Reportedly, most humans have the ability to name and to distinguish 150 to 200 different colors, but there are thousands and thousands of varying shades and hues. One has only to go into a series of paint stores and look at the color swatches to see that this is true. Or one has only to recall the amusing scene in *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* where Myrna Loy confuses the painting contractor with a series of outrageous color descriptions to confirm that our color sensitivity far exceeds our ability to name and describe them.

Humans all have affinities for or dislikes of certain colors—colors that make us comfortable, colors that cause a sense of discomfort, colors that make us look good and colors that don't, colors that we buy, colors that we avoid. Additionally, a broad range of colors can be linked to human emotions—green with envy, red with anger, black for mourning and sadness, white for virtue. The following exercises are meant to help students become aware of the colors of the world around them and to help children develop their own personal preferences.

That's the wonderful thing about crayons—
they can take you more places than starships.

Guinan on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*

AGES

all

INTELLIGENCES USED

verbal-linguistic, spatial, kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal

HOLISTIC PRINCIPLES

1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10

MATERIALS

See each component.

One of children's favorite art media is the crayon. The July 1993 issue of *McCall's* reported that children spend 6.3 billion hours coloring worldwide; that by the age of ten, American children have used 730 crayons; and that in a Yale University study, the smell of a crayon was one of the most 20 recognizable smells for Americans (75). (Makes one want to go out and buy Binney & Smith Crayola stock!) And crayons are inexpensive compared to other art media. They can be a highly expressive art form—one that can be adapted easily to activities that maintain children's sense of visuality. They also provide students with many opportunities to discover a variety of colors.

Children have a passion for nice, sharp, new crayons. Rarely do they use or like broken crayons, even ones that have been resharpened. The following activities revolve around the wonders of crayons.

Color Quest

MATERIALS

assorted crayons (the larger the variety the better)
small notebook or pieces of paper
pens or pencils
assorted color swatches from paint stores

Have the children grab their boxes of crayons and go on a color quest. The more colors in a box the better, for the bigger boxes are full of unusual colors—periwinkle, thistle, cornflower, and so on. Because solid wax can be darker in the crayon then it is on paper, have children take along some white paper to scribble on and a pen and paper for logging what they find. With younger students, you may need extra adults or older students to help out. As a matter of fact, this is an excellent activity for mixed age groups of students, where older students are helping younger students find and define different colors.

This activity can be done outside or indoors. Commercial greenhouses or floral shops are especially nice to perk up students' dispositions in the winter and to help ward off the winter blahs. Paint stores have wonderful samples that might provide sources for comparisons and discussions later.

To heighten students' sensitivity to their surroundings, simply ask them to find color matches between their crayons and their environment. Which color families occur most frequently? Where are certain colors found? How many shades of the same color can they find within their environments? Are there color differences during different seasons? Do colors change with the seasons? Why? Are there really colors like thistle, periwinkle, or cornflower in the real world?

Color Quest Follow-Up Suggestions

1. Have students display their color logs.

2. Allow students the opportunity to discuss in small groups the colors they found.

3. Have students classify and list their favorite colors.

4. Have younger students label the colors in their classroom.

5. Have students create a rainbow mural with the different colors they found or with the students' favorite colors, and have the students place their names on their favorite colors on the rainbow. When creating the rainbow have children use their old, broken crayons. Teach them how to use the side of the crayon by pulling back the paper in order to get a broad, sweeping stroke. (This also shows them that crayons don't have to be new and sharp to be fun.)

6. Have students draw different things or color premade designs using a rainbow of their favorite colors as opposed to solid colors.

7. One of the activities that many of my older students liked to do was to rename colors of crayons. I would unwrap the crayons or cover their original names. I asked students to use a dictionary or thesaurus to find descriptive names for the different crayons. This activity allowed students to exercise their creative imaginations while teaching them the value of both descriptive naming and using a thesaurus. After students have chosen new names for the colors, have a contest to select the best or most descriptive new name.

   The Crayola company recently instituted a similar challenge by introducing 16 new colors and running a contest in which consumers were asked to name the additions. Using the new names Crayola has chosen, students may decide whether they agree with the choices or can come up with better, more descriptive names.

8. What happens to all those broken pieces and stubs? These rejects can be salvaged and recycled into interesting components for pieces of art. Students can grate old crayons, place the shavings between two sheets of waxed paper, place the waxed paper between newspaper or layers of thin old rags, then press the

paper with an old iron set on a warm setting. The finer the crayon shavings, the more transparent the product will be. The iron should be adjusted so that the setting melts the shavings and seals the two sheets of paper. Getting the right temperature will take some practice. Students may wish to intersperse fine and coarse shavings for a varied effect. They can also use bits of colored tissue paper or colored cellophane in addition to the crayon shavings.

The compressed creations can be used in other projects or by themselves. Many of my students liked to make mobiles from cutout shapes made from the pressed paper, mounting the shapes on hangers with matching or contrasting string. Other students chose to create stained glass windows from various colored papers. With younger students you may wish to place the creations in a construction paper or cardboard frame and place them on the windows. The result is well worth the smell. Be very careful to ensure that students don't cut themselves while grating or burn themselves while pressing.

Colors Inside and Out

MATERIALS

a prism or collection of crystals that act as prisms
a collection of colored cellophane, colored bits of clear plastic, or plastic glasses of different colors
assorted flashlights
a mirror
pieces of different colored fabric or scarves
a mirror
music

Each color has its own personality—each shade, each hue, each subtle variation triggers a perception of a human mood or feeling. Children need to explore those perceptions, those projections of mood and feeling in order to develop preferences as expressions of self and taste.

The following are exercises that allow students to develop some sense of color perception and to relate their perceptions to moods and feelings.

This examination of color should start with the simple introduction of the prism; the division of ordinary sunlight into the spectrum always fascinates viewers. Additionally, there is a wide variety of inexpensive prisms that students can purchase to hang in the windows of their homes to create their own rainbows. A prism should be part of the standard science equipment in every elementary school.

After children have explored the color band of the prism and decided what colors in the color spectrum are their favorites, have them look at the world through colored lenses by having them look through one of the following:

- the bottom of a variety of colored plastic glasses
- pieces of colored cellophane
- colored cellophane attached to a cardboard tube
- colored cellophane taped to glasses without lenses or to glasses made from cardboard.

No matter which way students experience this form of altered awareness, have them discuss their reactions after the experience, including comparisons of their perceptions and their likes and dislikes. How did the experience make them feel? How did things look? How would they like to live in a world that looks like that? Is it possible that other planets would look like the monochromatic views?

Stained Glass Windows

Older students may wish to create a stained glass window with the colored cellophane. The window will be especially effective when placed in a sunny window or door where students can look through,

seeing the different effects that varied colors have on the view, or where light filters through the window or door casting colored shadows into the classroom. For older students this exercise can also lead to a study of famous stained glass windows and to the techniques used to create them. If you have a stained glass artist in your community or a stained glass workshop or store, or do stained glass projects yourself, students will enjoy a demonstration in the art of stained glass construction.

Monochrome Perspectives

Using 10-to-15-inch square pieces of different colored cellophane, mount each color in cardboard frames (premade frames for overheads work very nicely). Have students look at themselves in the mirror and their surroundings through the various colors of cellophane. Students should discuss what they see as they look through the various colors. Do they have a favorite color to look through? Does one color make the world look better to them? Why? Do they look better through one color? Do their friends look better in one color than another? Do some colors make them feel uncomfortable? Do some colors make them feel dizzy or sad, happy or mad? Students may wish to write about their reactions or their favorite colors in their seeing logs.

Color Me Me

This activity enhances self-awareness. Younger elementary children usually have their clothes bought for them. Some of them even have the clothes they wear picked out for them every day. Some students have to wear hand-me-downs and have no choice about the colors of their clothing. Although many students may not be able to choose their clothing, they can certainly develop color sense about what they look good in and what colors they like. The following activity was created to encourage students to notice themselves and what colors they look good in.

Place a large mirror where the children can use it. Collect samples of different colored solid pieces of cloth so that the children can drape

the colored cloth around themselves and look in the mirror. You may wish to mark the colors with numbers and color names. Older students can do this for younger students or code the colors for other students. Using the draped pieces of fabric, students should note how they look in a variety of different colors. They should be encouraged to seek other opinions in addition to noting their own reactions. Students can enter their favorites or the most flattering colors in their seeing logs or create a personal or classroom chart of flattering colors.

Colors in the Environment

Colors are changed by light, seasons, reflections, and environments. Have students note how these elements change the colors of cloth, crayons, color swatches, color samples or chips, or tile samples. Read "Bolded Colors" by Leslie Wilson.

BOLDED COLORS

Daylight brings bolded colors
Robed with shocking pleasures.
Brazen colors, pulsating
As lighted, sparkling treasures.
Some screaming for attention,
Some with subtle twists and bends.
Upside down and backward,
The variation never ends.
Daylight makes them brighter.
Noon sees a range complete.
In dusk the colors soften;
At twilight they retreat.
Are the colors sleeping?
Or just waiting for the day?
Does Nature make them disappear
so they don't fade away?
But then when I awaken
Again, I'm greeted by the hues.
A world alive with colors
Creates many different views.

1. **COLORS AND LIGHT:** Have students look at the objects in the room and notice their colors. What happens to the colors when the lights dim? What happens to colors in candlelight? Have students look at material in natural light, under a lamp, under florescent light, under water. Investigate the power of light and its relation to color. Have students note in their seeing logs the differences that light and environment make on objects.

2. **COLORS AND WATER:** These observations can be extended to the way students relate to colors as the colors are changed by environments. If you have an aquarium in your classroom, submerge colored stones, marbles, or other solid, nontoxic objects in the water and see if the water changes the way the materials look. Or you may want to take a field trip to a large aquarium, if one is nearby, to give students a sense of how water and light mix to change the colors of different objects.

3. **UNDERSEA COLORS:** To create the effect of an undersea scene, sheathe different sized flashlights with varied shades of blue, green, and purple cellophane. Students may also create designs on or poke holes in the cellophane sheaths to create different patterns. Turn off all the lights and play some quiet, soothing music or environmental recordings of natural sea sounds. Have the children shine their lights on a blank wall, or on the ceilings while they lie on the floor. Ask students to move their lights to interpret the sounds of the music. Students can also create underwater games. They can pretend they are swimming underwater, or that various colored lights are schools of fish, waving sea grasses, or coral. They can be merfolk, living in an underwater kingdom.

There are a wonderful variety of books for every age of elementary student that are about the sea. Books such as Leo Lionn's *Swimmy* or Armstrong Sperry's classic tale *Call It Courage* can be used in this activity. For example, you could use the book Swimmy with primary students. Designate the different fish with different flashlights and colors. As the story is read aloud, the children can act it out using their lights as the characters. Many older students will have fun acting and narrating for younger students.

You can also use the under-the-sea activity to foster students' relaxation and as a basis for imagery. Experiments using biofeedback show that patients are able to reduce their blood pressure, heart rate, or anxiety by watching fish, bubbles, and the interplay of light and water in an aquarium. Students can simulate the calming effects of aquarium action with the lights and music, creating their own worlds of underwater fantasy. Older students can use this exercise as a basis for a soothing imagery experience; the experiences can be recalled to reduce stress, to trigger creative writing experiences, or to create guided imagery exercises for themselves or for others.

4. **COLORS AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTS:** Someone suggested that students use lights that were covered with shades of green, blue, and purple to simulate the depths of the deep sea. But similar visual simulations can also be triggered using other monochromatic color schemes. For example, you could cover the lights with reds, oranges, and yellows to simulate the sun or a hot planet.

5. **CLOUD WATCH:** Younger students might find appealing a variation on the light theme, a cloud watch. Like light, clouds are elusive elements. They appeal to the imaginations of adults and children alike. Clouds take on different dimensions and colors depending on the time of day and light conditions. Discuss the aesthetic, artistic, and scientific natures of clouds with students. You may wish to read or have students read books such as *Nimby* by Jasper Tompkins or the poem "Story Clouds" by Leslie Wilson.

STORY CLOUDS

I lay upon the dark green grass
And gazed up at the sky.
I blinked, did I really see
A dragon floating by?
Its head was long, its mouth ajar,
Flames shooting from its throat.
And did I see St. George come out
Across a castle moat?
I could have sworn his sword was drawn—
That he raised a mighty shield—
Whence he stabbed, and thrust and parried
'Til the dragon disappeared.
Then, within the blinking of my eyes
No knight, no sword, no beast.
High stacked clouds were all I saw,
A hundred, more, at least.
But with the turning of my head
Came a group of dolphins true.
They swam, and jumped, and played
In a sky of water-blue.
Their famous smiling faces came
Through waves of foamy cream.
I laughed at their antics
And reveled in my dream.
And so I passed a pleasant day
Connecting earth to sky.
I love to watch the clouds;
They're like stories passing by.

After discussing clouds, take students outside and watch the clouds. Do the students see animals or other images or special things? What colors do they see in the clouds? What would it feel like to be a cloud? To be in or on a cloud? What are clouds really made of?

When students are back in the classroom have them pretend to be clouds to music. Turn off the lights, with the exception of one shadow-casting light source, and allow students to caste shadows with everyday objects. Give the children pieces of light material or scarves; allow them to move so that the material becomes billowy like a cloud. Examine pieces of fluffy cotton or cotton batting. Pull the cotton apart and paste it on paper to make a cloud picture. Clouds are really tiny droplets of water. Bring in a vaporizer. Dimmed lights will allow the children to see the mist, or you can project the mist as a shadow. Clouds are a wonderfully rich source for guided imagery and expressive movement activities. Have students use their imaginations to capitalize on the power of clouds.

Colors and Emotions

You can do this activity after doing the previous activities or on its own. Discuss students' perceptions of how colors relate to emotions. There are various studies that indicate that various colors trigger strong emotional responses in people—blues and greens have a soothing, calming effect, while red light excites brain activity. There is even a color termed "passive pink" because this color has a pacifying effect on wild or unruly children.

Using visual imagery, have students become a color—see it, hear it, smell it, taste it, feel it. After students have explored the power of colors have them discuss their responses. Older children or inspired younger students may wish to write a story, poem, or song about their emotional response to specific colors and how the colors make them feel inside. You may do this either alone or as a group language experience.

Older students may wish to find music that represents their perceptions of the colors they like or dislike. Or you could play different types of music and have students free-associate with various colors.

You can extend this exercise by using music to evoke emotional responses and then having the students translate those emotions into colors through visualization or artistic experiences. Ask students what colors they associated with which music. How did the music and the color associations make them feel? How would colors move if they could? How would colors dance? Have students discuss the reasons for their answers.

Color Orchestration

At the beginning of the twentieth century a group of French expressionists—Henri Matisse, Andre Derain, Raoul Dufy, Georges Rouault, Maurice de Vlaminck—painted pictures that expressed joy and pleasure. These artists used extremely bright, vivacious colors. Frequently families of colors dominated individual works and the artists painted objects in colors different from their natural colors. To a fauve artist grass need not be green, the sky need not be blue, or the trunk of a tree brown.

One artist who used color in this distinctive way was Henri Matisse. Have students examine such works as Matisse's *The Red Studio*. Talk about Matisse's use of the color red in this work. Choose examples of fauvist paintings from encyclopedias, art books, postcards, greeting cards, posters, or art print catalogs. A marvelous resource for classroom teachers is a coloring book entitled *Masterpieces* by Mary Martin (1981).

After students have become familiar with a variety of fauvist pictures, have students create original pictures using only colors in the same color family. Or have them take a picture of an object or even a coloring page, photocopy it several times, and paint or color each copy using primarily one color or color family for each. Students can also create interesting contrasting pictures by pairing, tripling, or quadrupling panels of the picture on the same sheet so that the opposing colors are immediately presented to the viewer for contrast and comparison. Pictures may be colored with markers, crayons, colored pens or pencils, chalk, or paints. After students have colored their pictures, have them examine the different emotions each color family evokes. Have students discuss their reactions.

This activity provides an opportunity for older children to develop some sense of dramatic comparison and provides them with the opportunity to experiment with color abstractions. Younger children love to draw the same picture over and over again, so this exercise gives them the opportunity to practice refining their fine motor skills and their senses of visual impression.

Resources

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7

Texture, Line, and Detail

Dreams may seem as fragile and floating as silk chiffon, but they are nevertheless sturdy props for easing our way.

Patricia Garfield

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY BLOCK 6
From Reality to Dreams

RATIONALE

Our surroundings are alive not only with color but also with line, texture, and detail. How things are constructed does make a difference! The following activities are an introduction to the rich detail that abounds in environments and in surroundings, in art and artifact. Impressionistic and neo-impressionistic paintings contain a wealth of inspiration for elementary children who wish to expand their attention to detail and convert that discriminating ability into forms of personal expression. In order to examine completely the importance of many of the suggested works of art and of artifacts students will need to get out their magnifying glasses and start looking.

AGE LEVELS

all

HOLISTIC PRINCIPLES

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11

INTELLIGENCES USED

logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal

MATERIAL

See individual components.

Mosaics

Since ancient times humans have created mosaics to enrich their environments. Minoans, Cretans, Greeks, Romans, Eutruscans, Mayans, Aztecs—all of these peoples used mosaics to decorate their surroundings. Have students examine examples of ancient mosaics. Older students may wish to use this exercise to see if they can use their reference skills to find pictures of mosaics to share with others. After students have looked at samples of mosaic art, discuss the many uses for mosaics.

Then students may wish to design and create their own mosaics. Students may also use patterns or coloring pages to create mosaics. Mosaics can be made from the following materials:

- assorted beans or dried legumes
- rice dyed with tempera or food coloring
- paper cut into specific geometric shapes—circles, triangles, or squares
- torn paper or tissue paper
- styrofoam™ packing material
- canceled stamps

Students may also want to design group mosaics. They will design the mosaics on paper, then get in a group holding up different colored pieces of paper to create the design. This project takes planning and spatial and logical abilities to transfer visual images to explicitly detailed patterns. A teacher, parent, older student—someone should be prepared to take a picture or video tape the pattern so that participating students can see what they accomplished.

Fine Art: Texture and Detail

Impressionism, post impressionism, expressionism, neo-impressionism, and offshoots such as Fauvism and cubism spanned a period from the 1870s to the 1920s. Artists used strong, distinct brush strokes—cubes, points, or dots, swirls or circles, wavy lines, and so forth—to create not only wonderfully interesting works of art, but to convey mood and feeling in their paintings.

You will need to get examples of such paintings for this activity. Reproductions of art works are available on inexpensive posters, on postcards, in art books and encyclopedias, and on greeting cards; many school and public libraries also have copies of fine art prints on display. School librarians can be extremely helpful in procuring unusual materials and frequently order posters of art from particular periods when they know teachers are doing related activities in class. Some university and public libraries have art prints that can be checked out. There are even computer programs that allow the user to take trips to famous museums. Videotapes also offer a wide variety of famous museum tours and often showcase special editions on particular artists or groups of artists. Choose a variety of pictures that have distinctive stroke patterns so that students can observe the technical differences among artists' work. Have students use magnifying glasses to examine pictures that have distinctive styles in brush strokes. Students may also wish to study the lives of the painters who used these distinctive techniques. Students may wish to try to duplicate and practice the same types of brush strokes in their own works. They can use markers, pencils, and crayons as well as paint brushes or palette knives to achieve unusual effects.

MATERIALS

crayons
chalk
paint
markers
assorted types of paper
magnifying glasses
selected pictures from the aforementioned sources

Creating a Neo-Impressionist Artwork

Examine the works of George Seurat (*Le Cirque, The Bathers at Aisieres,* or *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande*). Seurat was a neo-impressionist (specifically a pointillist). He created pictures from tiny dots of primary colors. Careful examination of his works will show students that his pictures are composed of thousands of tiny dots of a variety of colors. Students are frequently surprised at how much work this technique requires and are often curious about the effects and the optical illusions inherent in Seurat's work. Have children draw, paint, or color pictures with tiny dots after they have examined Seurat's paintings. Students will have fun making pictures using this technique.

Creating a Post-Impressionist Artwork

Van Gogh can be classified as a post-impressionist painter. He believed that he could express his innermost feelings by using dramatic colors and brush strokes. He used all kinds of dots, squiggles, swirls, and curves. Students may enjoy studying the techniques he used in some of his paintings: *The Starry Night, The Sunflowers, The Night Café,* or the *Portrait of Patience Escalier.* Children can use markers, points, pens, pencils, crayons, chalk, or paint to create outlines of shapes and experiment with all kinds of different strokes to create different effects.

You can enrich these activities by using music to encourage movement and imagination. Students can paint in time with the meter and rhythm of various kinds of music. During the students' examinations of painters, have them discuss their impressions and their emotional responses to the various works. As students experiment with the various types of strokes and textures, they may wish to discuss their emotional impressions. Also, have students discuss and react to their own creations as well as the creations of classmates. Don't forget to have them make entries in the seeing logs.

One of the most important aspects of studying art of this period is that it lets students know that all art doesn't have to look realistic to be considered successful. Art is a way of seeing and expressing

oneself. It is therapeutic, a way of recording and expressing feelings and emotions, hopes, dreams, aspirations, fantasies, and impressions. Art is a language in its own right; it is a way of communicating both with oneself and with others. All pictures don't have to look like something; they may be expressions of inner feelings and thoughts. Pictures of color and texture can create pleasing images, illusions, impressions. Students need to know these things.

Taking a Different View: Cubist Artwork

Older students may wish to continue their ventures into the world of art as a method of personal impression and expression. The cubists provide a visually interesting and challenging perspective and will help students develop their senses of perception and preference. One of the primary elements that separates these painters from others is their attempt to offer representations of objects from several different views in the same painting and frequently within the same space or plane. Their paintings rely heavily on the use of geometric shapes.

The works of Paul Cézanne influenced the cubists' use of brush strokes, colors, and geometric shapes. The cubists themselves fall into several different categories but the initial movement began around 1907. The cubists include artists such as Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris, Robert Dulaunay, and Fernard Léger. Examples of cubist paintings include *Window on the City* and *Circular Forms* by Delaunay; *Ma Jollie, Three Musicians, Guernica,* and *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* by Picasso; *Three Women* by Léger; *Road Near L'Estaque* by Braque; *Guitar and Fruit Bowl* and *The Bottle of Anis del Mono* by Juan Gris. There are many others.

Within this group of artists the work of Picasso is especially interesting because his painting career spanned almost sixty years. The work of Picasso provides a visual record of how the talent and perception of one individual can change and evolve over a lifetime. He is an example of how individual artistic intelligence, mood, and talent change and grow. This realization can aid students in their quest for self-discovery. Students can compare and contrast Picasso's works from various years. This activity will help students to develop their own senses of intrapersonal growth.

Have students try to construct simple pictures using geometric shapes to represent things they see. Reluctant or unsure students can take coloring pages, advertisements, and simple drawings and draw right over them, superimposing geometric shapes over the softer curved or realistic lines. Students may then try drawing different geometric shapes to represent other objects.

The cubists also broke objects into pieces visually and rearranged those pieces on the same plane, in new arrangements, or with interlocking pieces. More advanced or adventurous students may wish to try their hand at drawing different views of the same object on top of one another or in the same plane. Trying to construct different views of the same object increases students' spatial perceptions and abilities.

Cubists also used color to create a definite mood or a strong impression. Duluaney's *In Window of the City* is painted mostly in blues and purples. Have students compare and contrast the use of color by various cubists and the works of cubists to those of the impressionists and expressionists. Students may then wish to combine colors to reflect or convey moods or feelings.

You can enhance these activities by playing different types of music and discussing the activities after students have completed their projects.

Line

As students investigated their environments for patterns, textures, and colors they also encountered lines of various shapes, lengths, sizes, dimensions, and textures. Like many other artistic elements we have discussed, lines also express emotion and mood and provide a record of personal impressions and expression.

Seeking Variety in Lines

Have students reflect on the elements of lines they have already encountered or reinvestigate their surroundings and environments

for unusual lines. Are the lines horizontal, vertical, diagonal, straight, dotted, curved, warped, bold, fine? Do lines going in different directions in the environment create different impressions and perceptions? What about lines going in different directions in pictures? Do students have favorite types of lines? Do they prefer vertical to horizontal? Diagonal to curved? Students can enter their reflections on lines in their seeing logs. Next, have students practice drawing different types of lines.

Experimenting with Materials

Students are used to working with materials that are fairly easy to control—crayons, pencils, pens. Now it is time to have students begin experimenting with different types of materials: toothpicks, string, chopsticks, old toothbrushes, fingers, whisk and other types of brooms, and vegetable brushes. Have students use the various materials to create works of art by drawing only lines. Students might choose to trace body parts such as their hands or feet. They might also draw whole faces or isolate elements such as mouths or noses. Or they might try drawing freeform objects, geometric shapes, or simple objects. Reluctant students can take work that they have done before and do it again using different types of lines. This gives students opportunities to develop some sense of self-criticism.

Changing Lines

Have students use the same material they used in the experimenting activity to draw the same object they drew in the experimenting activity using different types of lines. Students may add to their previous drawings so that there are multiple representations of the same thing, or they can divide their paper into triple or quadruple panels and replicate the object in the same position. The contrasts can be quite striking, especially if the panels are displayed in paper or cardboard frames.

Piggybacking on Others' Lines

Lines can also help students develop their interpersonal intelligence. This exercise offers two ways to allow students to piggyback on one another's ideas. Have students doodle on sheets of paper. Place the squiggles and scribbles in a grab bag. Students choose drawings from the bag, interpret what they think they see, then use the doodles as the foundation for a work of art of their own. Students may not work on their own doodles. When they have completed their drawings, have students discuss them. Both the originator and the completer should talk about their feelings as they were involved in the creation. You can extend this exercise by having three or four people work on a piece for timed intervals.

A variation of this exercise is to number students as ones and twos. Have the ones start a drawing, and after a set amount of time, have each one give the drawing to a two to continue. Students can also take turns drawing at fixed-time intervals. If you want to encourage intuitive communication processes, don't allow students to talk during this activity. After students get good at this type of collaboration they can be encouraged to include some of the elements from the other exercises in this activity.

Writing Lines

The artistic elements used to draw lines can apply as well to the written word. Often students practice writing so that it is merely legible, not expressive. However, one of the stages that budding adolescents go through is that of creating a unique signature. Some children start this process at age nine or ten, and others wait until their late teens. One's signature is directly tied to self-expression and can change dramatically over time. During the preteen and teen period of experimentation, children try a variety of slants, dots, endings, crossovers, squiggles, curly lines, and so forth. Signatures can change from one day to the next. This is a visible example of students searching to find just the right look to express their inner personalities.

Mirror Images

Have students take transparent typing, tracing, rice, or calligraphy paper and fold it in half lengthwise. On one side of the divided crease, they write or print their names or a word that is expressive of or has special meaning to them. Students can write in their regular handwriting or use some expressive personalized way of writing their names or words. They may extend lower case letters below the crease to the blank side of the paper.

Next, students refold the paper with the writing on the outside and place the paper against a window with the written side toward the window. They trace the name, transferring it to the blank half, saving lower case letters until last. When students open the tracing they should have a connected mirror image of their name or word. They can decorate, animate, and embellish to create a caricature, animal, horrific, decorative, or interesting design.

Graffiti

Students of all ages enjoy both the anonymity and the notoriety of writing material for public display. This activity will help students express themselves in positive, colorful, and creative ways.

Put up a large piece of plain paper on a wall or bulletin board. This paper will serve as a graffiti board. Encourage students to write bits and pieces that represent themselves. Be sure, however, that you instruct students about appropriate forms of public expression. The students should use expressive lines and elements from other activities when writing their graffiti.

You may have a certain goal in mind for different graffiti sessions; you may ask students, for example, to write on a theme, to write poetry, or to react to something. Always make the sessions expressive and artistic. You may use the graffiti board only once or use it as a continuing forum for students' public expression—a place where students can enter the reality of their peers and see bits and pieces of others' hearts and souls, and where they can unfold parts of themselves.

Students may wish to write material from their seeing logs on the graffiti board. For example, they can include favorite pictures, cartoons, prose, poetry, lyrics, sayings, words that have visual and expressive elements.

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY BLOCK 7
Seeing through Dreams—Dreamcatchers

RATIONALE

Whether they remember them or not, all normal people dream. Dreaming is related to the creative consciousness of humans. Alton Harrison and Diann Musial (1978) address the importance of dreams as a form of consciousness that has a definite place in the processes involved in education. However, dreams—both daydreams and those generated during sleep—are generally ignored in the current processes of American schooling.

Other cultures do not ignore dreams. The Senoi of central Malaysia consider dreaming an important part of living, and thus it becomes part of the educative process. Senoi children are encouraged every day to discuss their dreams and the possible meanings of their dreams with members of their families. Senoi reverence for the knowledge brought in dreams extends to the resolution of conflicts. At an early age children are taught to continue a dream from one night to the

next in order that conflicts within the dream may be resolved. Senoi children are also taught to use their dreams to help live their waking lives.

Within the cultures of many American Indians, dreams are viewed as prophetic and sacred gifts. Depending on individual tribal traditions, children are taught to share and interpret their dreams as important elements of their lives. The Aboriginal peoples of New Zealand and Australia can enhance their awareness by going into another, sacred dimension known as Dream Time. In Dream Time, these peoples gain knowledge and wisdom that is beyond their reaches in regular time. It is reported that during visits to Dream Time aborigines can see the tracks of animals and people that have passed over an area days before. The Aborigines believe that knowledge about the world and how life must be lived was created in Dream Time.

Contrasted to those cultures, many Western cultures perceive dreams as merely flights of fancy and fantasy. Indeed, within the walls of traditional Western schools dreams are rarely discussed. If we find students gazing into the distance daydreaming, we admonish them for not paying attention. Yet advanced science has discovered that the brain emits four basic wave patterns—beta (wide awake); alpha (relaxed and the entry level to all other states); theta (the state of deep relaxation, reverie, and ideating); and delta (delta has two levels—light sleep in which we are dreaming, and the deep sleep state, which is dreamless). Frequently, it is as we relax in the alpha stage, headed for the theta stage, that ideas come together. Students perceived as daydreaming may, in essence, be searching for ways to connect ideas, or about to enter the active thought stage of the beta cycle from the alpha stage. We also know that the theta state often allows the brain to relax enough to think of new, unusual, or creative ideas. Yet, with all our knowledge about the superior learning and thinking that can take place in the theta stage, traditional American schools still dismiss the importance of dreaming and relaxation as important tools for learning.

The following activity is meant to encourage students to think about and discuss their dreams. The purpose of this activity is not to analyze dreams, or even to use them in some therapeutic endeavor; the purpose is to help students see dreams as a possible learning or

thinking tool. After all, Albert Einstein reportedly discovered the theory of relativity ($E = mc^2$) during a dream in which he was riding a beam of light.

The Dreamcatcher

Dreamcatchers seem to be part of several American Indian traditions. Various references trace dreamcatchers to the Lakota, Ojibwa, Chippewa, and Oneida cultures. No one is exactly sure which group began the tradition, or, indeed, if it is American Indian in origin. The practice appears to occur in tribes from the northern plains of the United States and Canada and from around the Great Lakes regions. The practice is linked to tribes who use cradleboards for their young. The dreamcatchers were hung on the cradleboard in front of the sleeping infant. They were used to ward off evil dreams and to encourage good dreams to find the minds of sleepers.

The dreamcatcher is a circle, encasing a net that looks like a spider's web. In the middle of the net is a bead, polished pebble or stone, or a jewel that attracts and guides good dreams through the net, down a feather, and into the minds of sleeping people. Because bad dreams have sharp, jagged edges, they get caught or snared in the web of the dreamcatcher's net. When the rays of the morning sun touch the netting, the ensnared bad dreams dissolve under the cleansing power of the sun's light.

There are many ways to make dreamcatchers. You will need to consider the age and skills of your students when choosing your dreamcatcher project.

Why does the eye see a thing more clearly in dreams than the imagination when awake?

Leonardo da Vinci

Making a Paper-Plate Dreamcatcher

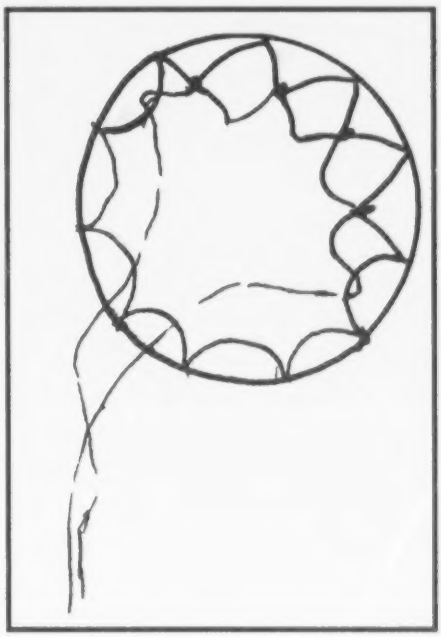
MATERIALS

paper plate or piece of cardboard
embroidery yarn or string
3 to 5 beads
a feather

Begin by cutting the middle from a paper plate to leave a half- to one-inch rim, or cut an eight-inch circle out of a sheet of cardboard and a smaller circle inside, again leaving a half-to one-inch rim. Using a hole puncher, punch between fifteen to eighteen equally spaced holes around the edge of the rim. Lace yarn or string across the opening, overlapping at varied points to create a web. Be sure to leave a space in the middle of the web as an entry point for the good dreams. The jewel, pebble, or bead should be attached here to show the smooth, fluid good dreams the way. Leave about three to five inches of thread dangling from the last hole to add additional beads and to attach the feather.

Place beads on the thread and attach the feather to the end so that it dangles from the rim. The good dreams flow through the web and slide down the feather to the minds of the dreamers.

Making a Traditional Dreamcatcher



Older students may wish to try a more traditional approach. Have them find a supple twig that is strong but that they can bend easily into a six-to-ten-inch circle. American Indians used willow branches, but any supple wood will do. Bend the twig or branch into a circle and attach the ends with cord. You may also use the outer rim of an embroidery hoop. You can leave the circle as it is, or decorate it by covering it with string, cord, yarn, or strips of soft leather.

Next, attach one piece of thin guitar string, fishing cord, or nylon or acrylic thread to the edges of the circle every 1 1/2 to 2 inches, leaving the cord slack between points of attachment. You are creating layers of the web. Subsequent layers will be attached to the middle of each slack area, creating a trapezoidal form, as you weave the thread around the circumference of the circle. Again, it is important to leave a hole in the middle of the circle. Be sure to attach the bead or jewel in the middle before you knot off and tie the last loop of the web. You can tie leather or yarn strips decorated with beads to the bottom of the hoop and suspend a feather or feathers. You can also tie strips of leather or yarn to the top of the circle so you can hang it up.

Discussion

As children construct their dreamcatchers, have them discuss their dreams, both good and bad ones. Your class or individual students may wish to find out more about the history of dreamcatchers and the American Indian peoples that created the idea. Students may want to continue to discuss their dreams even after they have completed their projects.

Remember that the dream state amplifies one's abilities to synthesize ideas, children who can remember their dreams may wish to keep dream journals or logs. Some people learn to solve problems or create ideas in dreams, and students may wish to think about an idea or problem before they go to sleep in hopes that they will find a solution within the context of their dreams.

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Endings

As a culminating activity, have students create self portraits. Students should start lying down on large pieces of paper and having you, an aide, a parent, or another student trace their bodies. Students can then use some of their favorites techniques from the exercises to decorate their self portraits. You can display the self portraits and use them as a catalyst for some intriguing personal discussions.

Great is the art of beginning,
but greater the art of ending.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Roadsigns, Roadblocks, and Destinations: An Epilogue

Things are pretty, graceful, rich, elegant, handsome but until they speak to the imagination not yet beautiful.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

We must address the whole child in schools. But what do art and creative imagery have to do with learning and knowing? Children are always opening doors and peeking in. Sometimes we are just too preoccupied with our own traditions to hear the differences in the patter of their footsteps or to see the unique ways they have of reaching for the latch.

Imaginative play, imagery and dreaming, opportunities and time to examine things and formulate questions, exposure to things that are new and different or fun, and changing perspectives are all paths to learning. Learning about people, learning about the environment, learning to question and solve problems, learning to move and grow through imitation and experimentation, learning to examine the self, learning to build upon things already known and felt are no less valuable paths to knowing then are textbooks or dittos or lectures. There are many roads, many paths, many ways that lead to the same place.

All of the activities in this book have been designed or chosen to help students express themselves and maintain or nurture their inner and outer senses of sight and wholeness. All of the activities have been used successfully with elementary children. I hope these activities will give teachers and students opportunities to investigate, share, and develop intrinsic parts of themselves.

MY SOUL'S OWN VOICE

by Leslie Owen Wilson

The old woman artist, mother of my mother, sat still
beside a window in her studio.
Looking out into the world beyond,
she spoke to me in a soft, familiar hush like rustled grass.
And in a litany borne of age and wisdom
said—as if to the air, the heavens, and the shadows:

"Luckily, I had some teachers
who changed my life.
They saw in me a child of wonder
and of promise.
For at that time of beginnings, it was an image
I had pushed far away from myself.
With great gentleness and kindness
they took me by my hand and heart and mind
and led me through great doors too large for small children
to open.
They knew, beyond these doors, I would glimpse
the image of my true self.
There would be my destiny and the future visions of my
imaginings.
Through those portals of splendor, I met the flurried magic
of art and music
and the rhythmed words of ancients.
There were such patterns, sounds, and sights
that struck me all but dumb with their resplendence.
And in those special places were the surprises and
connections to my inner self.
Through the efforts of those dedicated few
I entered new worlds of wonder and achievement
to find at last my soul's own voice.
It was they who let me look upon their magic mirrors, thus
finding the vision of my special face."

Then she turned to me, smiling
and pointing to her still wet wares, her prizes and the
children of her imagination, said:
"All of this has been possible because of them.
My child, remember well,
for you have chosen a profession
that has great power.
Learn to use that power well."

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Index

A

abstract-symbolic intelligence, 50
activities, using, 64, 74–77, 84, 98–99.
See also names of specific activities
advocacy, for children, 40
aesthetic, the, 57
aesthetic education, 57–61
aesthetics, 57
ages and stages, 64
ages 6–9, 67–69
ages 9–12, 70–72
allegory, 124–30
Arguelles, Joseph, 120
Armstrong, Thomas, 50
art
activities, 98–99, 109–20, 148–61
appreciation of, 99
defined, 150–51
Art and Science, 114
auditory intelligence, 52

B

behavioral objectives, 74
bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, 52
"Bolded Colors," 138
brainstorming, verbal, 113
brain wave patterns, 157
breathing, 91, 93–95
bridges for learning, 31, 54–55
Brittain, W. Lambert, 58–59
Brookes, Mona, 114
Bush, Jane, 119

C

Call It Courage, 140
Carlyle, Thomas, 36
caves, painting, 118–19
change, 1
evaluating, 7–8
initiating, 4–7, 10–11
metaphors for, 2–3
vectors of, 23
child development, 64, 114
stages of, 67–]72
Clark, Barbara, 42–43
cloud watch, 140–42
collaboration, 6, 11, 73
color me me, 137–38
color orchestration, 143–44
color quest, 133–35
colors, 131
activities, 132–44
colors inside and out, 135–36
commitment, change and, 5, 11
communication, nonverbal, 112, 154
competition, 71, 82
concrete operational stage, 66, 67
cooperative relationships, 86
co-passenger model of change, 3
Cougan, J. J., xii–xiii
covert curriculum, 19–20
crayons, 132, 134–]35
creative writing, 119, 140
creativity, 34, 99
holistic education and, 46
loss of, 16–]19
cubist artwork, 151–52
cultural mindsets, 15–16
curricula
"phantom," 40
types of, 19–21

D

decentering, 90, 98
dependent model of change, 2
detail activities, 147–61
drawing
on the ceiling, 111–12
on ideas of others, 112–13

upside down, 109–10
Drawing on the Artist Within, 109
dreamcatchers, 158–60
Dreamplace, 119
dreams, 87, 156–58, 161

E

education
aesthetic, 57–61
definitions, 39
future, xvii–xviii, 39
history of, xiv–xvi
holistic, 41–48, 84, 85–86
integrated, 42–43
today's model of, xvii
educational reform. *See* change
Edwards, Betty, 109
Einstein, Albert, 158
Eisner, Elliot, 74, 77
Elkind, David, 40
Ellis, A. K., xii–xiii
embossing, 106–7
Emile, 64
emotional distress, 25
emotions, colors and, 142–43
environment, colors in, 138–42
environmental issues, 125
ethics, 124–30
evaluation
of changes, 7–8
of expressive activities, 80
expressive activities, 77–80
expressive movement activities, 142
expressive outcomes, 77, 79

F

fable, 124–30
fantasy, 87–88
fauve art, 143
feminine integration, 48–49
fine art activities, 149–52
fine motor skills, 144
Frames of Mind, 50
fresco, 111

G

Gardner, Howard, 34–36, 49, 50, 53, 55–56, 114
gestalt, 41
gifted students, 53–54
grading, 75
graffiti, 155–56
Griffin, R., 41, 44
guided imagery, 88–92, 140, 142
resources, 92–93
sample exercise, 93, 96–98

H

Harlan, Calvin, 114
Harrison, Alton, 156
hidden (covert) curriculum, 19–20
history of education, xiv–xvi
holistic education, 41, 43–44
activities and, 84
feminine integration and, 48–49
principles of, 46–48, 85–86
Howey, K. R., xii–xiii
Hunter's Effective Teaching Model, 21

I

ideas, new
evaluating, 7–8
initiating, 4–7, 10–11
If Rocks Could Talk, 119
illnesses, 25
imagery. *See* guided imagery; visualization
imagination, 130
exercise for, 123
holistic education and, 46
loss of, 16–19
integrated education, 42–43
Integrative Education Model, 42–43
intelligence, 35–36. *See also* multiple intelligences

interpersonal intelligence, 52, 112–13, 154
intragenerational disjunctures, 22–23
intrapersonal growth, 151
intrapersonal intelligence, 53
intuition, 112, 113, 123, 154

K

kidnapped model of change, 2

L

Lazear, David, 50, 51, 52
learning, 73–74, 163
  Michael's tenants, 81–82
learning problems, 25
LeConte, Ronald, xvii
LePage, Andy, 34–35
light, colors and, 139
lines, 152–54
Lionn, Leo, 140
logical-mathematical intelligence, 51
lone traveler model of change, 3
Longstreet, W. S., 22–23
Lowenfeld, Viktor, 58–59
Loy, Myrna, 131
Lyon, George Ella, 119

M

Magical Child Matures, 28
Mandala, 120
mandalas, 119–20
Martin, Mary, 110, 143
Maslow, Abraham, 59–60
Masterpieces: A Coloring Book, 110, 143
materials, experimenting with, 153
Matisse, Henri, 143
McCall's, 132
Michael, John A., 58, 81–82
Michelangelo, 111–12
mirror images, 155
Molt, Emil, 44
monochrome perspectives, 137
monoculture, 56
Montessori, Marie, 88
morals, 124–30
mosaics, 148
Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House, 131
multiple intelligences, 49–56, 84
Musial, Diann, 156
music, in activities, 143, 150
musical intelligence, 51–52
"My Soul's Own Voice," 164

N

Nachmanovitch, Stephen, 55–56
A Nation at Risk, xi–xii
neo-impressionist artwork, creating, 150
Nimby, 140
no peeking, 122
no-peeking box, 123–24
null curriculum, 20

O

objectives
  behavioral, 74
  problem-solving, 75–77
observation, 25–26
olfactory sense, 123
overt curriculum, 19

P

painting caves, 118–19
parable, 124–30
parents, change and, 6–7
perceptual thought activities, 108–12
perspectives
  monochrome, 137
  multidimensional, 124
  reversing, 108–]9
petroglyphs, 117–19
phosphenes, 114–16
  activities, 117–19
photographic memory, 28–30, 88
Piaget, J., 66, 80, 87

Picasso, Pablo, 151
pictographs, 117–19
post-impressionist artwork, creating, 150–51
prism, 136
problem-solving exercises, 77
problem-solving objectives, 75–77

R

reading aloud, 24–25
relaxation exercises, 91
research, change and, 6, 10–11
resource lists
  allegory, 130
  color activities, 144–45
  dreamcatchers, 161
  guided imagery, 92–93
  Michelangelo, 112
  perceptual thought activities, 110–11
Rieser, Dolf, 114
round robin reading, 24–25
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 64
rubbings, 106, 107

S

Samples, Bob, 50, 51, 52, 53
seeing
  new ways of, 105–12
  with the senses, 121–30
  through words, 124–30
seeing journal, 103–4
self-awareness, 137–38
self-criticism, 153
self-esteem, 65, 69
self-image, 65, 68, 69, 72
self portraits, 161
senses, seeing with, 121–30
Seurat, George, 150
Shane, H. G., 22–23
signatures, 154
signs, 114–20
spatial intelligence, 51
Sperry, Armstrong, 140
spontaneity, 16–19, 34
stained glass windows, 136–37
Steiner, Rudolf, 44–45
"Story Clouds," 141
storytelling, 119
  "The Stream," 126–29
stress, 87–88, 91, 95, 140
Swimmy, 140
symbols, 114–20
synergic-natural intelligence, 53
synergic-personal intelligence, 52

T

tactile experiences, 122, 123
teaching methods. *See* traditional teaching methods
texture, 149
textures trip, 106
thesaurus, using, 134
tombstone rubbings, 107
Tompkins, Jasper, 140
traditional teaching methods, 24–25, 30–36, 54–55

U

undersea colors, 139–40
understanding, children's capacity for, 65–66
"The Unitary Child," xix
upside down drawing, 109–10

V

Van Gogh, Vincent, 150
vectors of change, 23
verbal-linguistic intelligence, 50
Vision and Intervention: An Introduction to Art Fundamentals, 114
visual activities, 99–100, 103–12, 143–44
visual gifts, ignored, 30–34
visual information, processing, 29–34
visual intelligence, 51
visualization, 26–28, 87–88, 118. *See also* guided imagery

136

activities, 121–30
visual problems, 69

W

Waldorf Education Movement, 44–45
water, colors and, 139
whole-brain education. *See* integrated education
Wilson, Leslie Owen, xix, 138, 141, 164
writing lines, 154
written (overt) curriculum, 19

137

NOTES

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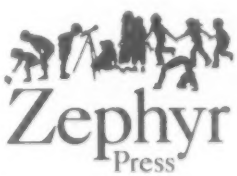

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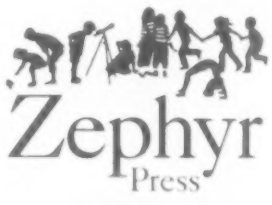
Leslie Owen Wilson, Ed.D., is an assistant professor of education at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. She received her doctorate from Oklahoma State University. She has taught classes in educational foundations, educational psychology, curriculum, theories of learning, and creativity. The University of Wisconsin has awarded her for excellence in teaching.

Children come to the world as precious gifts. They must be nurtured with care in an atmosphere of respect and reverence. They should be valued for their individuality and uniqueness. . . . Teachers should frequently regenerate, restore, revise, realign, and refresh their sense of pedagogy, their professional artistry, their views, and their commitments to children.



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